EVERYCHILD'S SERIES

OLD SETTLER STORIES

FLETCHER

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EVERYCHILD'S SERIES

OLD SETTLER STORIES

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EVERYCHILD'S SERIES

OLD SETTLER STORIES

BY

MABEL ELIZABETH FLETCHER

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To

PHILIP, HENRY, AND JOHN

FREDERICK, AND EUGENE

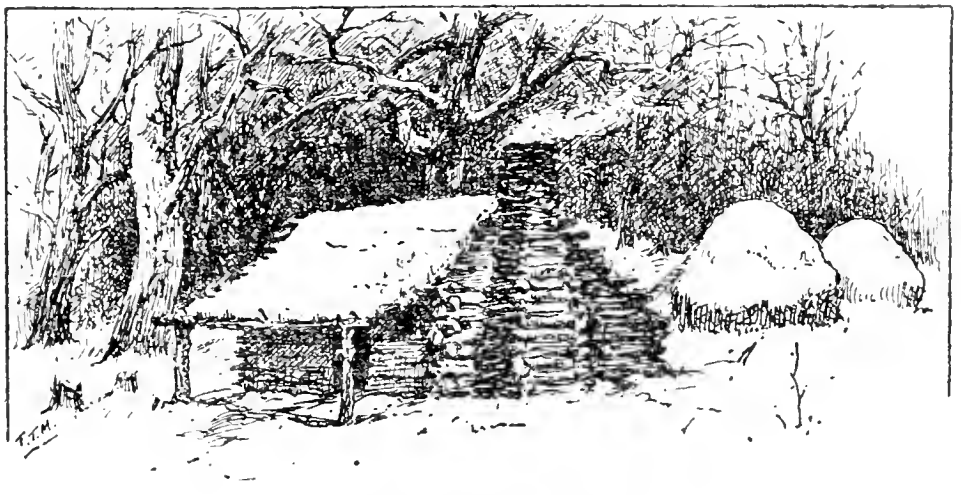
For some of the material used in these tales and for the verification of doubtful points, the writer is greatly indebted to various histories of Macon and McLean counties, and to the *Decatur Review*.

CONTENTS

OLD SETTLER STORIES

THE BIG SNOW

It was the morning of a gray day in November. From a little log cabin on the edge of



The Big Snow.

the timber skirting Lake Fork, the smoke rose slowly. It was a cabin of the roughest type, made of small logs notched and put together. The cracks were filled with "chinking" and daubed with clay. The stick-and-clay chimney was stained by the smoke and

weather to a color as dark as the house itself. Over the cabin towered two mighty oaks, the two tallest trees on the extreme edge of the wolf-haunted timber.

In the one room of the house, on this particular day, was an anxious group. Miles Smith stood by the rough table, pulling his fur cap down over his ears, and buttoning his fur coat closely about him. In front of the fireplace, gently rocking her sick baby, Polly, sat his wife, her eyes going sadly from her baby to her husband. Arden, the twelve-year-old son, was staring out the window at the lowering sky.

"Well, Jane," said Mr. Smith, putting his shotgun to his shoulder, "I must go. Take good care of Polly, and I'll bring back the doctor for her to-morrow. And I'll try to get some wheat flour for you."

The tears rained down Mrs. Smith's face as she answered, "Oh, Miles, if you only didn't have to go! I'm so afraid for you!"

"There is Polly," answered her husband

gently. "She needs help. We've done all we can. And Bronson's sick. When he helped me put in my crops, I promised him that if he ever needed help I'd come to him. There's no one in the family to hunt, now that he's broken his leg, and I must take him some provisions."

"I know," said his wife bravely, as she wiped away her tears with her apron. "You must keep your word. But, Miles, do watch out for the Indians."

Her husband's face grew even graver, though he tried hard to smile and comfort his wife. He kissed them all good-by, and then turned sharply to the door. There he motioned for his son to follow him. Outside the cabin he said with an anxious glance at the sky, "I'm afraid it's going to snow. You'd better get out to the shocks and bring in all the corn you can, for a big snow would make things hard for us."

"Don't go, Father," begged Arden suddenly.

"It's Polly," returned Mr. Smith in a low voice. "I could wait a few days to take these things to Bronson, but I don't think Polly's going to get well without help. You mustn't let your mother know that, though. Take good care of her — and in case — in case — Indians come, get into the dugout."

The dugout was a secret cave room reached by a narrow tunnel leading from the cabin. A great settle concealed the opening; the sawn logs, too, were carefully fitted back into it, so that if the settle was completely removed, none but the keenest eyes could discover the opening.

Arden nodded, and his father took up the rawhide rope by which he was to draw the rough sled on which lay two wild hogs, completely dressed. He reached out and laid his hand a moment on his son's shoulder, then strode off with his load into the timber.

Arden looked again at the sky. It was even grayer and snowier-looking. The ground was already covered with white, thus enabling his

father to draw the sled easily to where the Bronsons lived, fifteen miles away.

The settlement was five miles beyond Bronsons'; when he reached there, Mr. Smith would remain all night, but the doctor would probably come at once on horseback to the sick child.

Arden at Once Began Carrying Corn from the Shocks.

Mindful of his father's words, Arden at once began carrying corn from the shocks to the rough stable, and even into the house It began to snow, and he worked all the faster. Although there was quite a pile of wood already cut, he took the ax and chopped up several young trees which he and his father had earlier cut down and dragged to the cabin. Alarmed by the dark sky and the swift falling of the snow, his

mother, who had put the baby to sleep, came out and helped him carry in the sticks for the fireplace. They filled one corner of the cabin, heedless of the dust and chips that fell, laying in enough to last a week, in case the snow should become very deep. By nightfall the flakes had ceased to whirl, but they lay fully a foot deep everywhere, and they were two feet deep in places where the wind had made drifts.

The next day the snow melted a little. Then the weather suddenly grew colder, and a skim of ice covered the soft blanket. This ice came just to Arden's knees, as he waded about, feeding the horse and cow, the heavy oxen, and the few chickens pent in one corner of the log barn. It was continually breaking through with him unexpectedly, and making him spill the milk or chicken-feed which he carried. The boy was extremely troubled. Little Polly seemed worse, and his mother was about distracted. With the child on her lap, she sat looking out

the window in the direction her husband had disappeared.

"The doctor will be here pretty soon," she kept saying.

Then the snow began again. After that Arden remembered very little of the passage of time. He seemed to work for days shoveling paths to the barn, and to the smokehouse and the woodpile. He feverishly gathered more corn from the shocks and stored it in the barn. He had to cook all the meals and wash the few dishes, for after the second day his mother sank into a sort of stupor, her mind intent only on the sick child.

Why did not his father come? Or the doctor? On the snow there was now a stronger skim of ice, about waist-deep; a horse could not travel on it, but a man could. Twenty miles was not thought a long distance for a doctor to come in those days. This same physician had gone thirty or forty.

By the fifth day, the snow was almost up to the boy's shoulders. It melted a little,

and the usual ice skim formed again. Then it snowed no more.

The cold bright sun came out and transfigured the whole landscape, but to Arden and his mother it brought little comfort. The boy realized dimly that little Polly was going to die. His mother seemed to have forgotten the child, to a certain extent. When she gave her a drink, or rocked her, it was in a certain wooden fashion that made her son afraid, though he did not know why. All the rest of the time Mrs. Smith watched for her husband. Arden knew that she feared that his father had been captured by the Indians. Keokuk, the old chief, had just ceded to the United States all lands held by his tribes east of the Mississippi River — and this without the knowledge of his rival chief. The treaty provided that Black Hawk and his followers were to give up their village and hunting grounds the next year. The angry old chief had declared the treaty a fraud, and was said to be trying to unite all

the Indians against the whites. No war had been declared, but there were rumors of ugly happenings, and pioneers were banding together wherever they could, prepared to defend the women and children.

On the tenth day after his father had left, Arden went to the barn through the tunnel he had shoveled. There he hunted until he found a short log which had been sawed in two, lengthwise. With his lips set, he began to hollow out the halves, using his father's adze. Baby Polly was going to die, and she must have a coffin. Under the circumstances, they could not dig her a little grave, but, he figured out, they could put her away in the deep snow near the house, and when the snow melted and help came, they could bury her properly. Her tiny, pretty body would lie in the slowly growing hollow of one log, and he would place the other over it, binding the two together with hickory bark.

He was so shaken by the time that he had finished hollowing out one piece that he

thrust his hands into his pockets, and went out into the deep tunnel that led to the house. As he stood on tiptoe and glanced over the wide frozen prairie to the east, he suddenly froze to attention. Outlined on a knoll far away to his left, he saw plainly the form of an Indian warrior. No other was as yet in sight.

Panic-stricken, the boy ducked and dashed madly into the barn, where he snatched up the rude coffin and a few ears of corn. Then he fled into the house. Polly slept peacefully on the shuck bed at one end of the room, and the fire was low on the hearth. His mother had been frying doughnuts, and at the sight of them, his eyes filled with tears, and he winked hard to keep them back. It was his mother's first real thought for him in all the sad days which had passed since his father left. Mrs. Smith read the evil news in his face, and dropped the noggin of small fried cakes.

"Indians?"

He nodded, speechless.

Then he found his voice. "We must get into the cave," he cried, swiftly dropping to his knees and pulling out the logs which filled the entrance. "You make Polly a bed in there, Mother, and I'll get some food and water. Hurry! There was only one Indian, and he was about two miles away, I think —"

Mrs. Smith, after she had rapidly made a bed for little Polly and placed her on it in the cave, gave a glance at the fire. It was very low. She hastily poured cold ashes over it, making it look blank and dead. Next, with Arden's help, she wildly but silently put the room in disorder, as if it had been the scene of a violent struggle. She was not able, after her long worry over her husband's delay, to think clearly. But she figured out that, if the Indians came, they would find the place so torn up that they would think the owners had been carried off by some enemy.

In a very short time the mother and child were settled in the warm passage. Arden,

after securing a flint and some dry tow chips, crept in after them. Kneeling in the small opening, he with difficulty pulled the settle back in place. Then he arranged some sticks of firewood under it, so that it might look to one outside as if they had been carefully piled there for future use. Next, building from behind, he put in place the logs which concealed the opening. This was the hardest of all.

They waited in breathless terror. It was not long before some one smote upon the door. Then he felt, rather than heard, the room fill with savages. At first the visitors seemed to explore every corner of the cabin. The terrified settlers could hear their guttural grunts, and occasionally a few words in the native tongue. There was next the sound of falling pewter dishes, and then the savages seemed to go outside. Arden fancied that they were busy searching in the smoke-house and stable.

Little Polly gave a moan, and her mother rocked her frantically in her arms. Suddenly

Arden's heart gave a sickening leap, for he heard some one taking away the wood in front of the settle.

"It has come," he thought.

He gripped tightly the sharp butcher knife in his hand. The first Indian who peered in under that settle would never speak again. Of that he was sure. Should he, Arden, kill his own mother, rather than let her be taken, if capture was certain? Men had been known to kill their wives rather than to let them become prisoners to be tortured. No, he decided. There was a chance that they would not be treated very harshly, and the settlement (if all the men were not already killed) might band together and rescue them. It was a big decision for a boy to come to, with a savage steadily working his way to them.

Suddenly the sound of the removing of the sticks ceased. After a short time there was not a single sound in the cabin. Could the Indians actually have gone away, questioned

the boy, his heart thumping loudly. His grasp on the butcher knife loosened a little. Yes, they had.

At once he was possessed with a desire to leave their hiding place. In spite of his mother's alarm, he noiselessly pushed out somewhat one of the logs in the opening. He looked out. There was not a person in the room, which was now in wilder disorder than before. Then, through the outside door, which had been left open, he saw a strange sight. Going away from the cabin, on top of the hard crust of the snow, were the Indians. Several of them — there were about ten in all — were loaded down with the wild hogs which Mr. Smith had stored in the smoke-house for winter use. The other savages each had food of some sort or other. The thing which made Arden's eyes open wide was this: every Indian, except those carrying the frozen hogs, bore on his arrow some of the doughnuts which had been overturned before the family went into hiding! One great fellow

had a necklace of them around his neck. And the last one in the little band, a slender boy, carried off with him little Polly's coffin, filled with the brown rings!

"Mother! Mother!"

"What?" whispered Mrs. Smith.

"Come here quick and see something funny! They're going away. They were just hungry, and we needn't have hidden. Look there!"

When Mrs. Smith saw her doughnuts waved around on the points of the arrows as the happy Indians went off to the east, in spite of all her fright and trouble, she laughed.

After that day they saw no more redskins, but a new anxiety arose. The visitors had taken almost all of their provisions. The most serious loss was the loss of the wild hogs, which were to have lasted all winter. Luckily one whole hog had been put down in salt, and this the Indians had somehow missed. Arden pounded corn in a mortar to make corn meal and hominy. It grew harder and harder to

get the corn out of the shocks and into the house. Twice Arden shot a deer, for the starved creatures came without fear up to the very door. They were so poor, however, that they were worthless.

The only bright spot in their trouble lay in the fact that little Polly was getting better. The fever had almost left her, and although she was still very weak, both the mother and Arden felt that she would live. Mrs. Smith had ceased to watch for her husband's return. From her strained face and from the way she spoke about the spring planting, the boy knew that she hardly expected to see her husband again. He had surely been captured by Black Hawk and his tribe as they went west on their annual hunting trip.

One morning, four months after Mr. Smith had left, the two were sitting by the fire, watching Polly patty-cake in her old happy way. Suddenly they heard the loud barking of a dog outside. It was a strange sound, after so many weeks of blank, white silence,

and it startled them so that they both screamed. Little Polly began to cry. Then the door opened and in walked Mr. Benson, his face red with cold.

"Oh, did he get to you? Have you seen him?" gasped Mrs. Smith.

"Indeed he did," answered Mr. Benson heartily, "and just about saved our lives with those hogs. I couldn't move, because of my broken leg, and the children were too little to hunt. But you'll be wanting to see him? I'll bring him right in. You see, he had a fight with wolves, and he was pretty well chewed up when he fell against my door, and —"

Mrs. Smith waited to hear no more, but tossed her baby on to the bed. She rushed to the door, and out into the tunnel. There she saw, on top of the snow, the old sled, and on it lay her husband, pale, thin, and terribly scarred. He was carefully cushioned on bear skins. But he was alive, and he was smiling!

Arden and Mr. Benson carried him in and

put him to bed, while little Polly crowed and laughed at their joy. She was not afraid of this new father with the red stripes on his cheeks and hands. Too weak to stand, Mrs. Smith knelt by the bed, her hand clasping her husband's, while Mr. Benson told all of the story he would ever tell.

Within a mile of the Benson home, Mr. Smith had been attacked by a small pack of wolves. He did not realize how serious was his situation at first, for wolves were often cowardly and easily killed. These were fierce and very large, however, and he had a long and hard fight. At last he killed every one, losing only one hog in the fray. He himself was badly wounded and suffered terribly during the fight. He was delirious for two weeks, and too ill to travel until now. Mrs. Benson could not leave the two sick men and her three babies to send Mrs. Smith news of her husband's safety, and thus the weeks dragged on. Another neighbor brought provisions to Mr. Benson just before the last of

the wild hog meat was eaten, and he promised to carry the news to Mrs. Smith, and get the doctor for the sick child, if the child still lived. He had set off into the forest, and they supposed he had arrived. They had no way of knowing, for he was to return by a different route. As soon as he was able to limp along, Mr. Benson dragged his friend home.

The kindly neighbor was never heard of again, and the people of the country searched a long time for his body, after the great snow finally melted. They never found it, and no one ever knew what became of him.

Little Polly lived to be a rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed young lady. She was known as the belle of Lake Fork, the town which years later sprang up at the edge of the timber. At the country parties, when the young people flocked about her, she used to tell, as she folded her hands demurely over her "bit calico" dress, how once upon a time the Indians carried off her coffin full of doughnuts.

MATTHEW'S FIRST BUCK

MATTHEW COVERDALE was the youngest of seven husky brothers who lived in the wooded bend of Crow Creek. In those days a boy who had not killed, or at least helped to kill, a wolf or a bear, was unusual. And a boy who had never killed a deer was practically unknown.

Yet Matthew, who was fifteen, had never dragged home his buck. The reason was this: every time he started one and triumphantly chased him down, just as he raised his gun to fire, he was overcome by the "buck ague." When the animal came bounding rapidly toward him, his knees suddenly became weak, his teeth chattered, and he shook so that his shot always went wild. Even older hunters occasionally were afflicted with this buck fever, but this did not console

Matthew. His family must have meat, and have it often. It was necessary that he do his part of the killing, and since venison was plentiful, he suffered under his affliction more and more.

One night just at supper time, his oldest brother, Aaron, came home with a big buck tied to his horse's tail. Old Dobbin had dragged the carcass all the way, for it was too heavy for one man to budge. Matthew left his supply of mush and milk and went out to see the animal. It was an immense creature with wide-spreading horns.

"It's a ten point buck," cried Aaron proudly, showing where his bullet had gone through its heart.

As he stood there looking at the prize, Matthew's heart suddenly flamed with ambition. He went back into the cabin, where he ate his mush slowly. Then he pushed back his stool.

"I'm going out to shoot a buck," he said, "and I'm not coming back until I get one."

With that he took down his gun from over the door, and fastened in his belt a butcher knife. Had his mother been alive, he probably would not have been allowed to start off into the forest, at night, alone. His father and brothers, however, thought him well able to take care of himself. So, in the moonlight, he started off in the direction of Old Town Timber, which lay some miles from Crow Creek.

He was unable to find anything, though every now and then he heard cracklings in the bushes, and the soft scamper of some wild-wood thing. The hoot owls called down by the river, and the screech owls near him made him long, now and then, for his rude bed at home. A screech owl in the thick timber at night is not a pleasant companion.

Finally the boy crept into a hollow log and slept the rest of the night.

In the morning, as he was rounding a thick clump of timber, he came unawares upon a Kickapoo great dance. The Kickapoos at

that time were supposed to be friendly to the whites, but Matthew felt nothing but terror at finding himself in their midst.

"I won't dare slip off right away," he thought as he stood on the edge of the crowd, watching the dancers.

Indians in Groups of Two Were Dancing.

It was a strange sight. On the grassy sward eight Indians, in groups of two, were dancing around flat-footed, with tinkling bells on their ankles. The chief, Old Machina, to keep time to the dancers, was shak-

ing gourds with little pebbles in them. There was one other musical instrument. This was a ten-gallon keg, with a deerskin drawn tightly over one end. It was carried on the back of a half-grown papoose and a painted brave beat upon it with a stick.

Matthew continued to lurk in the circle of admiring squaws gathered about the dancers, and though he still thirsted to kill his buck, he could not help being interested in the queer proceedings.

The dancers' bodies were all painted black, but over their breasts, in white paint, a pair of hands and arms crossed. Outside the immediate circle of dancers stood a lithe young Indian who held up a stick in the shape of a gun. This, the boy afterward learned, was supposed to be the symbol of peace. Another Indian, even taller and more lithe, held up a tomahawk, his hand close to the blade. No one was able to explain that to Matthew afterward; in fact, they said he must have imagined it.

When the lad saw Old Machina drop the head of a slaughtered deer into a pot, he became a hunter again, and, choosing a moment when the Kickapoos were not looking, he ran fleetly away into the forest, and in the direction of home.

There was not the trace of a deer. Try as he would, he could discover no game larger than a rabbit. Must he, with shamed face, go home without any meat?

Later in the afternoon, however, he started a splendid buck. He was following the river, and came upon the animal in a windy covert. Now was his chance! Could he, oh, could he, master those trembling fingers?

Gritting his teeth, he managed to ward off the troublesome "buck ague" and shoot — but he shot a little too far back to kill the animal. He followed it down Crow Creek and across the little hills. Just as the buck rounded the last one, he saw it toss its head up and down as if in dire pain and distress. Taking heart by this, he crept closer, and

finally, by slipping around so that the animal stood sidewise to him, he shot it in the head. Down it came, and the boy bounded up to it.

The big creature was not dead, however, and Matthew had a long, hard struggle with it before it finally expired at his feet.

Then he could scarcely believe his eyes. He had done his part! He had killed his buck! And what a big one it was, with its great, spreading horns! Why, it must weigh a ton!

"But how'll I get it home?" said Matthew to a chattering fox squirrel who was scolding him vigorously from a burr-oak.

The longer he thought, the more impossible seemed this feat. He could not lift the animal, even if he used all his strength. He had no Old Dobbin to help him drag the prize home. If he left it, the wild animals would probably devour it, especially as it was so near night. Although he had not glimpsed anything savage, there were a few wild bears in the timber, and numerous tim-

ber wolves. Possibly the Kickapoos would come upon the creature, and Old Machina would make soup of its head! The thought was too much for the boy, and again he tried to lift his prize. It was of no use.

Now it began to grow dark. If Matthew ever wished to cry, it was at that moment. He longed to drag his buck up to the very door of the cabin. Then he would walk into the house where his father and brothers were at supper.

"I've got a little something out here," he would say. How they would pour out the cabin door, and how they would exclaim at the size of the creature!

"It's the biggest one any of us has killed," said poor Matthew, "and I can't tote it home."

He gulped a little.

At this point a slight sound startled him. Looking up, he saw an Indian. For a moment his heart quailed. Then he recognized "Turkey," a Kickapoo so named by the

settlers because of his habit of painting his face a bright red. Turkey had often stopped at the Coverdale house for food, when hunting was poor. The Coverdales had always fed him.

"Ugh!" said Turkey, looking down at the buck.

Perhaps the Indian would help him.

"Me kill buck. Can't tote him," cried Matthew eagerly. He pointed to the buck, then toward home; next he looked eagerly at the Indian.

"Ugh!" said Turkey impassively.

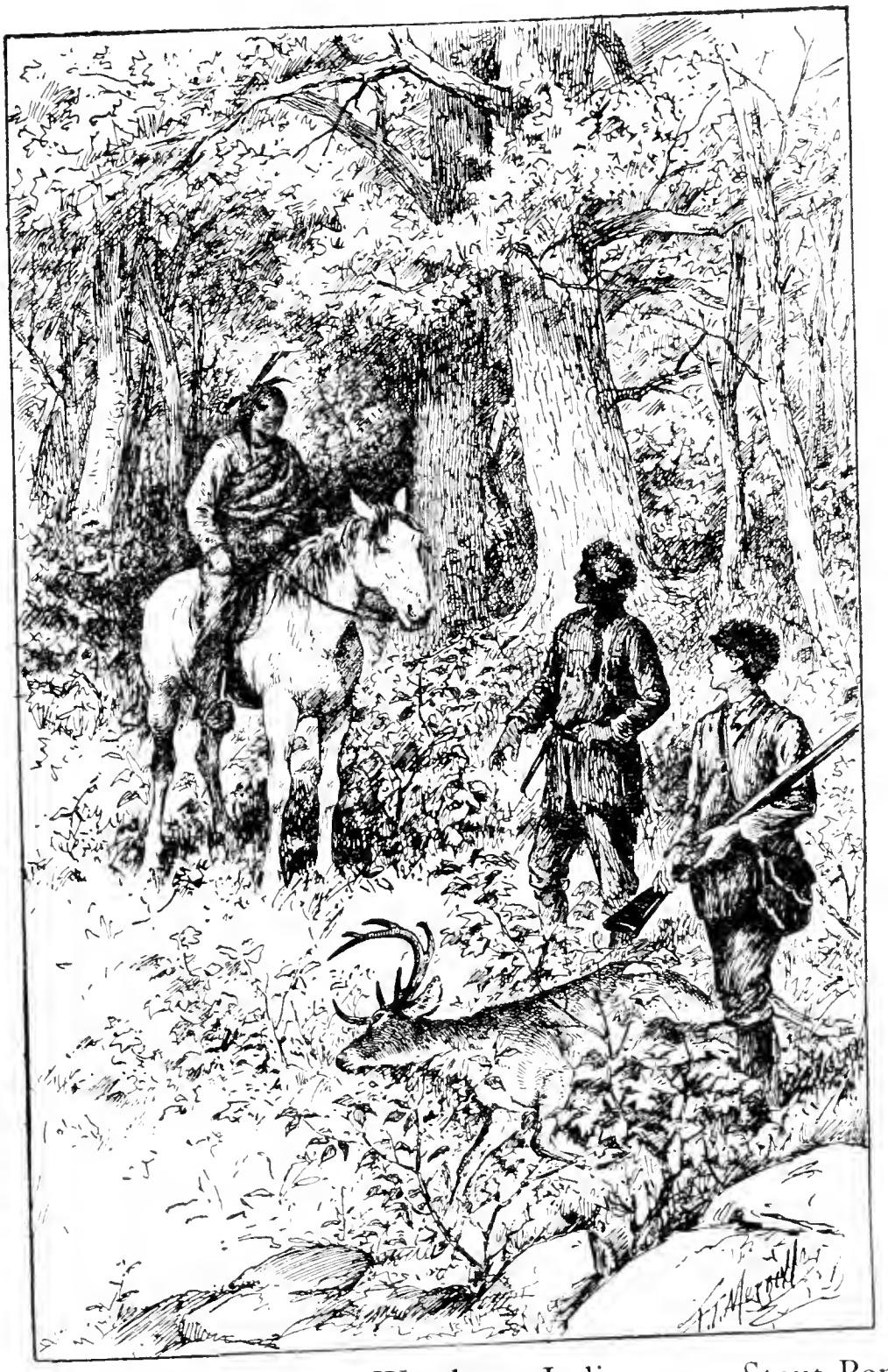
The boy tugged at the animal again, while Turkey watched him without a flicker of expression on his dark features.

Suddenly the Indian gave a queer call. Was he summoning help to steal the prize? Matthew felt for his knife.

In answer to the cry, there rode out of the woods an Indian on a stout pony.

"Ugh!" said Turkey.

"Ugh! Ugh!" said the second Kickapoo, eyeing the buck.



There Rode out of the Woods an Indian on a Stout Pony.

Then the two talked rapidly in the Indian tongue. At last the newcomer began to fasten the buck to the pony's tail. Turkey motioned for the boy to follow him, and he started off in the direction of the Coverdale cabin.

And when the moon came up a little later, it saw two stolid Indians and a pony, dragging a buck, while beside them the happiest boy in the world was turning handsprings all the way home.

JUMPING JEPTHA

Long ago there lived in a patch in the timber a family named Humphrey. They had come from Virginia in the early 40's in a "Virginia wagon," and were doing their best to level the timber and cultivate the ground. The wolves had gone from that part of the country at the time this story opens except for an occasional prowler in the deepest river timber, and the only large wild animals thereabouts were the beautiful big-eyed deer and the sly red foxes. There were four of the Humphreys: the father and mother, James, aged fourteen, and Abigail Rose, aged ten. All of them were used to seeing a deer lift startled head and crash away through the timber at their approach, or a red flash in the woods denote a fleeing

Reynard. It was not these animals that troubled the Humphreys; it was the raccoons.

There was one 'coon in particular who defied James's stoutest efforts to capture him. He was as large as a small fox, with five very small black rings on his tail. He climbed with swiftness, and he wore a face wiser than any owl or judge. It was for this last reason, added to the fact that he could jump as well as he could climb, that led Mr. Humphrey to name the thief Jumping Jeptha.

Jeptha's chief passion was chicken. He stole chickens daily, almost hourly, it seemed to the good housewife. He carried off eggs as fast as the indignant hens could lay them. In the spring the corn was never safe.

Traps were set for the animal, but he either passed them by or cleverly extracted their bait. James had shot at him, only to miss him time after time, as Jeptha jumped. 'Coon hunts had been organized, and other 'coons were slain, but Jeptha had been treed

but once — and the neighbors' dogs scarcely lived to tell the tale.

In the fall of '45, Abby announced one morning at breakfast her intention of killing Jumping Jeptha. She looked up at the ceiling of the cabin as she spoke. This ceiling was lined thickly with the skins of raccoons for warmth.

At the little girl's words her brother hooted and her father smiled.

"Never mind," said Abby Rose valiantly. "I *am* going to get him — you just see. He's caught twenty-two of my chickens. I s'pect he's got lots of my eggs, too, only I can't prove that. Now I'm going to catch him, and before I'm 'leven years old, too."

"I'll get you a pink dress from the store if you do," said her mother. "I'll use the next butter money for a start."

"And I'll have a real pair of shoes made for you," smiled her father.

"And I'll get you some candy," teased James.

You cannot imagine how wonderful these promises were to Abby, for in those days luxuries practically did not exist, and many a child never tasted candy until he was grown.

The family had planned to do all this for Abigail already, for a dearer, sweeter little frontier maid never existed, but the child did not know this. Her dearest wish was to own a pink calico dress sprigged with black, and to have a pair of copper-toed shoes like her brother's. At that time children went barefoot into the frosty fall. Abby, in her few short winters, had had but one pair of shoes; the rest of the time she wore heavy home-made moccasins. Butter was the principal thing the Humphreys sold at the store in the far-off town, and it brought only eight cents a pound in trade. Hence "store clothes" for the family were few.

The little girl's blue eyes widened now, and a bright light shone in them. She tossed her square little chin, and strode with long steps to the door.

"I'm not going to catch him in any *old* way," she explained as she turned condescendingly, " 'cause you've all tried that and failed. I'm going to find a new way."

Then she disappeared, while her father laughed again.

Abby's birthday, the tenth of September, drew nearer and nearer, but she had made no move, seemingly, to capture her enemy. In the meantime he had carried off two more chickens, Draggle-tail and Buff. She listened thoughtfully to all the accounts of coon-hunting told by her father and brother and their few neighbors, and she paid particular attention to Jeptha's peculiarities. He had a notch out of one ear, where a rash dog had tackled him. The rings on his tail were blacker than jet, and unusually broad. Unlike most raccoons, he occasionally came out of his hollow tree in the daytime, and went on a foray. James had seen him once, at ten o'clock in the morning, at the base of the old bee-tree in the hollow on Sugar Creek.

He had some food grasped in both his fore paws, and was shaking it violently back and forth in the water. When he saw James, he immediately shot up into the bee-tree, where he leered in triumph. More than once, when hunted, had he sought a tree too big to be cut, and particularly this bee-tree. Because there was so much wild honey in the neighborhood, no one had taken the trouble to cut down this immense oak and Jeptha gloriously came and went.

The family now often found Abby seated in deep thought on the settle, or wandering absently in the woods. To all their good-natured jeers she returned a quiet smile and answered, "I'm thinking out a new way."

In the meantime she had discovered the den of her enemy — something the others had failed to do. When she reported this fact, it was the day before her birthday. Mr. Humphrey, thinking she had given up her notion of capture, himself decided to catch the wily Jeptha.

Immediately Abby spoke up.

"He'll go to his den," she said.

"I'll head him off."

"He'll go up a big tree."

"I'll wait till he comes down."

"I'm going with you," said the little girl calmly, "and I'll catch him after you're through, with Carlo."

Carlo was a lean, mournful-looking hound whom a neighbor had recently given the child. She had trained the dog to perfect obedience.

Mr. Humphrey laughed, and Mrs. Humphrey protested, but finally Abby had her way. When it grew dark her father lighted a great, rude torch, and called his dogs, three in number. James went along to scoff, and even her mother threw a shawl around her shoulders and followed her little family into the night.

"Father," said Abby, before they came to the bee-tree, "I want to whisper something to you."

Mr. Humphrey stooped, and Abby cupped her two small red hands and whispered in his ear. All the while James jeered softly at her. When the little girl skipped away and danced a few steps in the moonlight, her father looked at her admiringly.

"See here, son," he said, "right now I link my fortune with Abby's. I've hunted Jeptha with you for two years, and we've neither been able to catch him. Now I'm ready to change partners."

"All right," grinned James, "only, if you say that, I'm bound to get him now. I hadn't meant to to-night, but now you watch me get him all by myself. Then, Miss Abby, you just watch me wearing that new calico dress of yours!"

"How are you going to get Jeptha?" asked the child, without a smile.

"Well, I'm not going to let him get up a big tree this time, and when I chop a little one down, the dogs will make short work of Mr. 'Coon."

They walked on through the dark, fragrant forest, their ears alert for every sound. Suddenly, while the four dogs were scouring eagerly through the woods, Abby, who was a little in advance of the others, gave an exclamation. In an open space along the creek, she had seen, in the moonlight, Jeptha washing his food in the water. She saw plainly his wise old face with its notched ear. Instantly he made a dash and went up the bee-tree which rose, mysterious and black, a short distance away. At the same moment the hounds began baying, for they had come upon his scent in the timber. Soon they were at the foot of the bee-tree, leaping and barking madly.

James lifted high the rough torch, and the little group could easily see Jeptha sitting on a large limb, and looking at them warily.

"It's no use waiting here," said James gloomily, after he had calmed the dogs somewhat. "He'll stay up there all night. And it would take a giant to cut this tree down."

Jeptha Sitting on a Large Limb, and Looking at Them Warily.

"I can get him," said Abby, shaking with excitement.

"You!" scoffed James. "What will you do? Climb up and push him off?"

"No," cried Abby, dancing about. "You tell him, Father, what I want him to do."

"Abby says," explained Mr. Humphrey, "that Jeptha would stay there two weeks if we would stay here as long as that, and that waiting will do no good, as you say. She also says that she's noticed that when hunters leave Jeptha (and how she discovered it, don't ask me) he comes down at once, and *goes in the opposite direction from that they have taken.* Now she will take Carlo and make a detour, coming up behind that bowlder over there. We'll wait here till we're sure she's hidden, then we'll make a a lot of noise and with the other dogs pass the bee-tree on a direct line away from here, and go out of sight and hearing. Abby promises to get Jeptha then, by a trick."

Still scoffing, after he had waited five or

ten minutes more for Jeptha to show signs of coming down from the tree, James consented to go with his father. Mrs. Humphrey gave one anxious glance at the big bowlder, and then they all went away.

Abby crouched behind this big bowlder, her hand on Carlo's head, to keep him quiet. She was shaking a little with the terror of being alone in the forest at night. She was sure that every rustle was a poisonous snake, and the bushes took on the outlines of bears, although she knew that there were no bears in that part of the country. Once she almost ran frantically after her family — then she remembered the pink calico dress, and crouched low again.

It seemed to the small girl like an hour, but it was only about fifteen minutes after the others were out of hearing, before she heard Jeptha sliding down the tree. From the shadows of her position she peered cautiously over the edge of the bowlder. Yes, there he was, the sinner, looking craftily

around to see if his enemies were really gone. Carlo moved impatiently, and Abby quieted him. A false move now would spoil the game.

Old Jeptha continued slipping and watching until he dropped to the ground. Then, glancing slyly in the direction that his hunters had gone, he scurried straight toward Abby and her dog. In a second he was at their side. Carlo leaped.

Abby never forgot that struggle in the forest. Although Jeptha had been taken at a disadvantage as he scurried along, chuckling to himself, he fought valiantly. It was all Carlo could do to hold his own, but after a long struggle, he got the animal by the back of the neck and shook him until he shook him to death. It was at this moment that Abby's father came running up. His shout brought the others. There, dead at last, never to rob again, lay Jumping Jeptha!

Abby was at once given her pink dress and the wonderful copper-toed shoes, and her

mother took two eggs and much butter to bake her a birthday cake, just like those of the little girls in old England. Added to that, the story of Abby's capture of Jeptha spread over the countryside, and after that many were the hunters who captured wily 'coons by her ingenious little plan.

THE PATTERN

It was the middle of the afternoon, and the May sun shone brightly down on the Wiggin farm. It was a very small farm, for as yet Mr. Wiggin and his tall son Jim had been able to clear only seven acres. These acres lay in the very heart of the timber, but somehow their owner seemed to prosper more than the average pioneer of his time. The Indians no longer crept with painted bodies through the long, dark forest stretches, and the wolves and bears were seen less and less. The 'coons, the weasels, the snakes, and the crows (who were continually carrying off young chickens) were practically the only wild things to be caught or put to death.

On this warm day, the two doors of the big log cabin were flung open. Little Martha, the red-headed baby, played in the east door-

way. She was talking happily to the white chickens who kept craning their long, half-feathered necks to peer in at her. Bending over the table in the middle of the cabin was Bessie, the oldest daughter of the house. She was laying several yards of bright green calico in pleats, then standing off to admire the effect. This calico, which had a tiny black polka dot figure, had been bought with the butter money, plus twenty-five cents which Bessie had received for a dozen quails. Butter brought five cents a pound. Bessie had proudly ridden to town with the butter and the quails, and the storekeeper in the rough log store had cut off for her with his shining scissors seven yards of the precious calico. The girl's butter alone could not have bought the gown, but her brother had generously donated the quails, and her father had added a cord of wood. When he hauled this to town with the oxen, the storekeeper had given him a dollar for it. Bessie and her father saw no money as they sold their

wares, for there was hardly any in the timber country. All bargains were made by trading.

"Mother," she said suddenly, "I'm not going to cut out this dress without a pattern. I'm going over to Nettie Ray's and get that one she got from her cousin Ruth, down on Big Muddy River."

At that time a pattern for making a dress was as precious as a handful of dollars. One rude paper draught for a dress was passed around among twenty or thirty or even fifty families over the countryside. If the pattern was made in the beginning for a very round and large woman, slender little maids of sixteen had some difficulty in fitting the gowns cut from it. They always managed it, however, and no one cared because practically every woman for miles and miles had a frock like hers.

"I don't care what you do," groaned a voice from the bed. Bessie's mother lay there; she was having her attack of "Illinois Shakes." On a second bed lay the girl's

grandmother. She, also, was ill. The two women were pale and yellow, as if frost-bitten, and now and then they groaned in their misery. Near the west door sat Bessie's grandfather, who had just recovered from the burning fever which followed the chills of this disease to which all pioneers in Illinois fell victim. Grandfather was weak and pale. He turned slow eyes on his pretty granddaughter.

"Isn't this your day for the shakes?" he asked feebly.

"Yes, but they don't come on till four o'clock. I can easily get back by that time," returned Bessie cheerfully.

"Bessie, you bring me the boneset tea," said her mother weakly.

"And bring me *Brady's Bitters*," quavered her grandmother.

The girl obeyed, and the two sick women drank deep of the medicine. In the fall every one on the swampy prairie took the chills and fever, more commonly known as

the Illinois shakes. This disease was not contagious, but it sometimes affected a whole family at once, and even a whole neighborhood. The chills came on at the same hour every day, or every alternate day, with deadly regularity. They were followed by a burning fever which left the patient so weak that he could not work at all. Bessie's family had been having the shakes for about a year now.

"If I wasn't just gettin' over my shakes, I'd go for you," quavered Grandfather.

"It's a passel o' nonsense, anyway," said Grandmother, sitting up in bed and trying to control her shaking. "All a passel o' nonsense! Why can't you cut out that dress just like your last? Joe'll like you just as well. Anyway, Ruth is as big as a moose-cow, and you'll have to whittle that pattern down turrible."

The girl flushed but did not answer. To tell the truth, the desire to look pretty in the eyes of her honest backwoods lover, Joe Brown, was gone.

The young schoolmaster, Mr. Hicks, who was to teach the Big Muddy school next year, was reported to be very handsome. Bessie was to meet him the next Thursday night at a party. A party was always a great event in the timber country, and the girl wished to look as lovely as possible in her new calico.

She daubed a bit of sorghum molasses on the baby's left hand, and hastily stuck on it a chicken feather. Pulling this sticky feather, first from one hand, then from the other, would keep the baby so contented that he would not cry. Then, bareheaded, swinging her sunbonnet by one string, she ran merrily through the tiny strip of cornfield and plunged into the forest.

It was dark and cool there. The weather had been unusually warm for May, and to walk here was a relief. Along the forest path she saw delicate pink lady-slippers growing, and here and there were low clumps of spiderwort. She chased a clumsy whippoorwill for several yards, and then, looking carefully

about her for rattlesnakes, she wandered off the path to explore a new portion of the forest. The sun was much lower in the sky when she came out in the clearing belonging to the Rays'.

The Ray cabin was built exactly like that of the Wiggins', except that it was smaller. It was full of bouncing children of all ages and sizes, and they overflowed into the yard when they heard Bessie's clear call. They clung about her like bees to a flower, and they pushed her into the house where a big pan of molasses taffy was cooling on the table.

"You can help us pull it," cried little Ben Ray. He strutted about proudly in his buff dress, which flared quaintly at the bottom.

Bessie did stay to help pull it, although she knew that she should not do so. After the candy had been eaten, she climbed into the cabin loft with Anne, who was just her own age, to see the coral earrings brought from "Old Virginia" recently by one of Mrs.

Ray's cousins. These were an heirloom, and Anne was to wear them the night of the wonderful party. Bessie's heart sank. Who would look at her, even in the beautiful new calico, if Anne wore in her pretty ears those lovely earrings? There were none like them anywhere in the timber.

Bessie soberly said good-by, and slipped away home, after a sticky kiss from Ben. Wrapped in a precious year-old newspaper from St. Louis, she carried the treasured pattern. As she got farther into the forest, the memory of the jewels dimmed a little, and she danced along, thinking of her finery to be. Then suddenly, almost without warning, the ague seized her. In a second she realized what had happened; she had lingered too long at the Rays'. She was now a mile from home. Her teeth chattering violently, she sat down upon a log to wait until the ague should cease. In about half an hour the attack was over, but the fierce fever came on and burned her through and

through. She rose unsteadily, and tried to walk homeward, but the way seemed strangely unfamiliar. She realized that she was flighty, and tried to call back her every-day senses, but they seemed to escape her, squeaking and gibbering at her from behind every dead stump and little bush. She pursued one of these strange little creatures for miles, and at last she triumphantly brought it to bay near a hollow log. She reached out to catch it, even though she hated it because it had such beady little eyes and wicked little tongue. Suddenly she heard a loud cry; then Joe came leaping through the forest with a forked stick in his hands. She knew no more.

They told her later that Joe carried her home. He had been going through the timber hunting for some lost hogs, when he caught sight of a blue dress. Going closer to discover the owner, he found Bessie sitting down near a log. Against this log was coiled an angry rattlesnake, ready to strike. Bessie,

who was delirious with fever, was just reaching out her hand to grasp it, when Joe sprang forward with his forked stick. He pressed the snake's ugly head to the ground and swiftly killed the reptile.

"She was callin' the varmint her common sense," said Joe, "and beggin' it to come back to her."

Bessie was none the worse for her adventure. She soon cut out her green calico by the much-prized pattern, made it, and wore it to the party. At Christmas time she and Joe were married, and they went to live in a little new cabin of their own, with great deer antlers over the fireplace, and two pretty pink shells on a shelf. And the wedding gift that Bessie treasured most came from Joe's mother. She had had it a long time in the bottom of her blue chest. It was a pair of coral earrings, every whit as beautiful as those of Anne Ray.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE ROAD

The Fleming family, who had come to Illinois from Indiana in the days of long ago, lived in a bend of the Sangamon River, not far from where the city of Springfield now stands. By hard work Mr. Fleming and his half-grown sons had made the usual clearing in the timber and constructed their rude cabin with the ceiling lined with skins for protection from the severe cold. In this cabin the family lived as happily as any family can in a wilderness. By this time the Indians had ridden away to the south and west, all who had not gone to their own mysterious happy hunting-grounds.

No dangerous wild beast had been seen near the Fleming home for over a year, and so, when Mary Ellen said *she* would go to the mill, her father did not object. It was

in the early fall, and he and the big brothers were busy burning stumps and clearing brush from the little farm. They begrudged the time it would take to ride six miles to the mill. This mill stood in a little valley through which the creek came rushing; it was a very rough affair of logs run by the cheeriest round little miller that ever grew dusty grinding corn. He was really the newspaper for the countryside. For twenty miles people came to have their grain ground, and to hear the miller laugh with his fat cheeks, round and red, blown out until the mirth exploded through his lips.

It was not the miller, however, who was the attraction for Mary Ellen. It was his daughter Ruth. Ruth was a slender little girl, twelve years old. She had eyes the color of the dark blue spiderwort, and her hair was as silky and as golden as the silk on the Indian maize. Ruth, in spite of her frail looks, could climb trees like a monkey, jumping from them as nimbly as a goat — in

short, she was a perfect comrade for wilderness play. Mary Ellen worshiped her, and now, when there was sudden need of corn to be milled, she begged to go.

"I'm 'leven years old," she said, "and nothing will hurt me. I've been with Father lots and lots of times."

"The timber is so thick, and you might meet some animal," objected her mother.

"None's been seen so long I reckon they're all killed off," returned her father comfortably. "It's all right for her to go, I suppose. That bear they got down on Crow Creek last year must have been the last of his tribe."

So it was decided that Mary Ellen should go. She mounted their one shaggy horse, and with a leather bag of grain nicely balanced in front of her, she started off on her journey.

"Daughter, tie your sunbonnet on," cried her mother after her, "or you will lose it."

But the girl, to whom a black sunbonnet was an ever present trial, simply pulled the covering over her head a little tighter, and

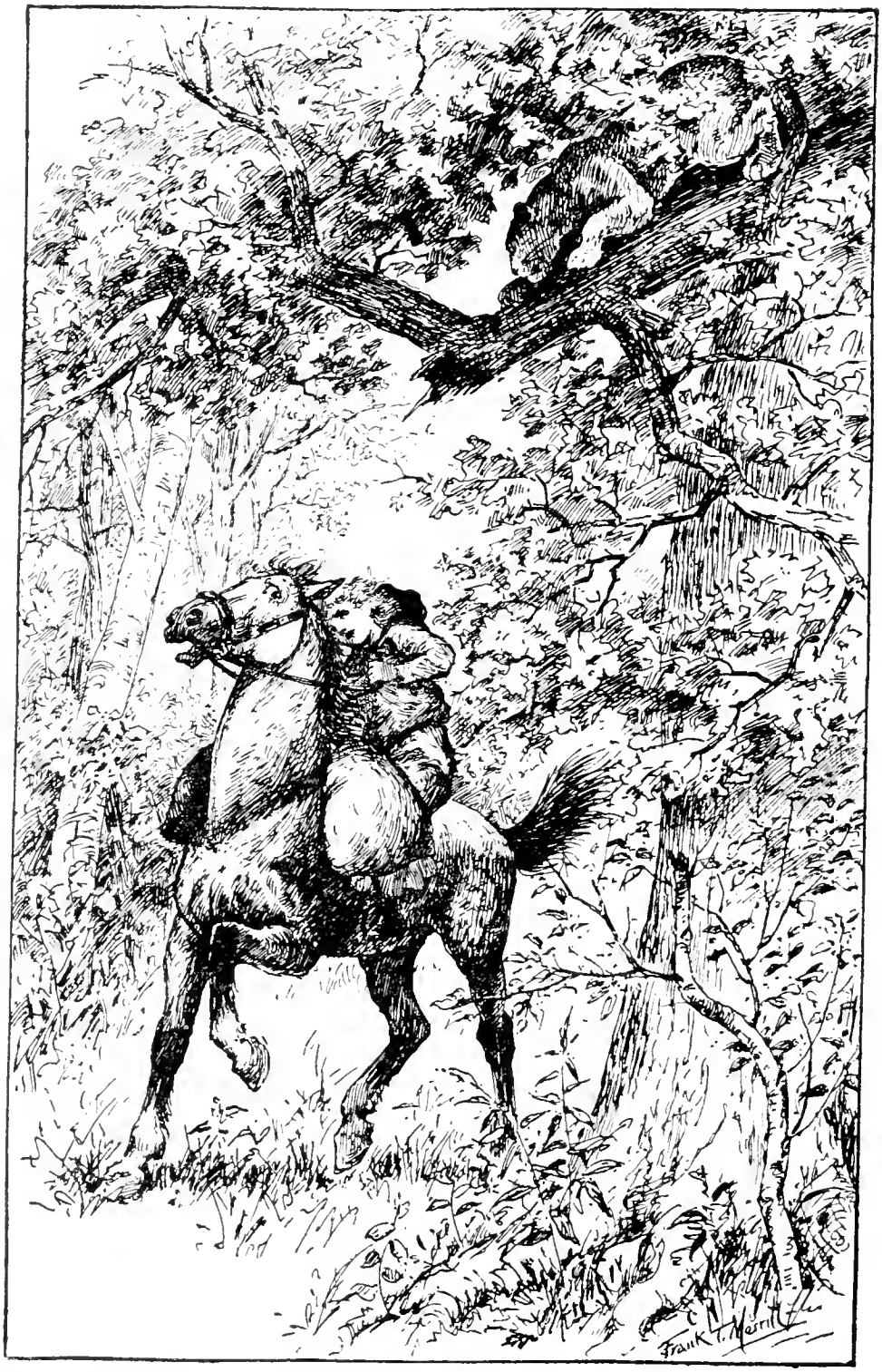
struck old Bess with the flat of her hand to make her go faster.

It was a lovely ride through the timber, and Mary Ellen enjoyed every minute of it. The cool afternoon shadows lay across the open places in queer black patterns, and everywhere grew the lovely autumn flowers and berries. There was yellow resin-weed where the trees were thinnest, as high as the horse's back, and the Black-eyed Susans lifted cheerful faces from the ground. In the deeper timber the delicate wild touch-me-nots grew thick, and in mellow shafts of sunlight, were thin, fairy-like stalks of golden-rod. Once a Kentucky cardinal flashed across her path. The little girl let the horse jog slowly along while she sang a refrain which had been running through her head.

"O sister Phœbe,
How happy were we
The night we sat under
The juniper tree."

She was singing this for the twentieth time in her clear voice, when suddenly Old Bess stood stock-still. She snorted, and refused to go another step. Mary Ellen looked around in amazement to see what had startled her faithful old friend. To her terror, she saw on a branch of a near-by oak, a great panther, ready to spring at her. She beat the horse frantically with her heels and hands then, and tried to make Old Bess run, but the animal only stood still, eyeing the panther.

The lithe creature in the tree could wait no longer for his prey, and sprang. He leaped right at the child's head, and his claws caught in the black bonnet. As Mary Ellen had not obeyed her mother and tied the strings under her chin, the bonnet and the panther went to the ground. The girl screamed, and the frightened horse plunged madly forward; soon they were fleeing like the wind down the trail which led to the jolly miller.



On the Branch of an Oak was a Great Panther Ready to Spring at Her.

With cheeks of chalk and long hair flying, she at last galloped up to the humming mill. There she fell in a heap from the horse's back, as the dusty miller and his daughter ran out to find the cause of the flying hoofs. At first, when she told her tale, her friends were inclined to disbelieve her, as no panther had been seen in that portion of the country for years. As Mary Ellen repeated her story, now with loud sobs, the miller grew serious. He left the mill in charge of his women folk, and, calling his three brawny sons, they set out on the trail over which Mary Ellen had come. There they found the torn sunbonnet, but of the panther there was not a sign, though they hunted long.

Mary Ellen did not go home that night, for she was too upset by her unexpected adventure. The next day the miller's oldest son rode back with her, carrying the corn meal. In spite of all her terror and her flying ride, the child had somehow clung to the bag of corn and brought it safely to the mill.

Several weeks later, some men who were hunting bee-trees along the creek, came upon the panther and killed him. He was an immense fellow with a tawny skin, and the Flemings shuddered as they realized how near their daughter came to death in her encounter with the savage beast.

"For once I am glad you did not obey me, my child," said Mrs. Fleming. "If your sunbonnet strings had been tied, you'd never have escaped."

"So'm I, Mother," returned Mary Ellen, clinging to her mother's hand.

"But I don't think it's a safe rule to follow except when panthers are after you, do you, Mary Ellen?" asked her father.

And Mary Ellen said no.

THE BARRING OUT ON PANTHER CREEK

One cold December morning in the year 1850, little Tommy Dean twisted about on his uncomfortable seat in the old log schoolhouse on Panther Creek. Try as he would, in spite of warning glances from the older boys, he could not sit still. When would it happen? How could they manage it? What would Mr. Dow do?

Tommy looked fearfully up to the front of the room, where the schoolmaster, Jonathan Dow by name, sat on a platform. This long-legged master was an unusual character in the settlement. Unlike the few teachers who had come before him, he refused to "board round" at the different cabins in the district, but insisted on boarding himself at the school. He lived on a vegetable diet; he kept apples

and potatoes stored beneath the floor of the schoolhouse, and occasionally corncakes given to him by a pitying housewife.

To his seventeen pupils, the "barring out" of such a provoking kind of teacher was no small problem. A sensible teacher went home at night and did not come back until eight o'clock the next day. You got there at seven, and, aided by your lusty schoolmates, you barricaded the door stoutly. When the master arrived, you demanded fiercely that he promise to treat you to apples and cider. If he refused, you held the fort until the enemy gave way; then you let him in.

At last Tommy's mates thought of a plan, and this December morning was to see it carried out. No wonder Tommy, who was just six, squirmed on his bench.

Promptly at eleven o'clock, John O'Dell, after asking permission, went noisily to the little room off the front end of the building. This served as both woodshed and cloakroom. The outside door to this was not visible from

the master's platform. In this room, when the weather was warm enough, stood the water pail. To this pail went John, and drank noisily. Presently the waiting pupils heard him open the outer door. He came back with an important face and went straight to Mr. Dow's desk.

"Phœbe Jones is out there in the sleigh," he whispered in a stage whisper, "and she wants to talk with you a minute."

Now Jonathan Dow had been sitting where he commanded a view of the road from each side of the house, and while the greased papers in the windows were dirty, he was sure that he would have seen Phœbe, who was like the freshness of the morning. He had heard or seen no sled on the crisp, sparkling snow.

"Very well, John," smiled the master, "tell her to come in and get warm."

"She — she said she wanted you to come out," hesitated the boy.

"That is impossible," returned the school-

master calmly. "Spelling class, come forward."

"Aw, let's put him out, fellows!" called John angrily, seeing that his clumsy ruse had failed. "Come on; he's afraid of us, anyway."

In fact, the rumor had gone around the settlement that the master was surely afraid of the boys, else why did he not whip them? To be sure, he had a way with him; everybody admitted that — and the pupils obeyed. But a good teacher never spared the rod, people thought, in those days. That Jonathan Dow was not secretly afraid of them never entered the heads of his seven husky boys.

At John's ringing words, bedlam broke loose. Benches were overturned, as well as the master's rude puncheon desk. Aaron Thwill's head went through the greased paper of the window on the south, and Aquilla Long, before the fray was over, found his head being soused up and down in the water

bucket by Mr. Dow. Seven husky, half-grown farmer lads are a problem for any teacher to handle, however, and after ten minutes of hard fighting, the vegetable-loving teacher was thrust out the door. Immediately it was slammed behind him, and the pupils began a vigorous barricading. They suddenly stopped in their work, for the ten girls of assorted sizes were most of them crying.

"Let's send the cry-babies home," said big John at last, and forthwith the girls were hurried into their cloaks and hoods and out into the snow.

The barricading began anew, but as the master had gone away, and showed no intention of coming back, the boys at length unbarred the door, and came out into the schoolyard. There they built a snow man, and pelted him with snowballs. Finally they made a snow fort, and had a pitched battle, lasting for over a half hour. Their disappointment because the teacher did not come

back was lost in the joy of an unaccustomed holiday, and they forgot to keep a sharp look-out for the return of Mr. Dow. He did not appear, however.

At noon they ate their lunches, with much scuffling and laughter, on the master's platform. When they had chased down every stray crumb on their clothes and devoured it, they went back into the yard again, and made a larger and even grander fort. It was barely completed, when Jimmie Schneiders saw old Pansy Mitchell coming down the road on her lean calico pony. Pansy Mitchell was a wrinkled, thin woman who gathered herbs all summer long, and went about nursing people.

"I reckon Sam Tolliver's sick again," said Jimmie. "Here comes Old Pansy."

The boys by this time were all on the south side of the wall of snow, and they raised their heads to peer over the bank. Sure enough, it was Pansy, dressed in the same old green coat with its many capes, each one just a

little smaller than the other, and the same weatherbeaten black sunbonnet which she always wore, summer or winter. To their surprise, instead of going on down the snowy road, she dismounted leisurely, tied the pony, and went toward the schoolhouse. Out of curiosity the boys kept still.

"Won't she be s'prised," giggled Jimmie, "when she finds us all gone?"

His companions chuckled, and rolled in the snow for joy, as they waited for Pansy's amazed face to appear in the doorway. But it did not. There was not a sound within the schoolhouse.

The boys grew curious. Finally Jimmy was delegated to creep up to the outer door, slip into the cloakroom, and peep into the main room to see if Pansy, like Lot's wife, had been turned into a pillar of salt.

Jimmie crept. He peeped. Then he uttered a strange cry, a cry which brought his schoolmates to his side in a hurry. They could scarcely believe their eyes, for there

on the platform, leisurely reading a book, sat the master. Across his knees lay a hickory rod, and he absently rolled it a bit now and then as he turned a page. On the rude puncheon desk hung Old Pansy's cloak and sunbonnet.

"He fooled us!" yelled Jimmie. His delight in the master's trick overcame his fear of "Old Tickler" lying on the master's knees.

At that the teacher looked up. The smile that then went over his face made every boy his sworn friend for life. He rose, put the rod in the corner, straightened his frayed cuffs, and turned to his flock.

"I wonder," he drawled, "if a little treat of apples and cider would be in season?"

Would it? As if in answer to the joyous whoop of the boys, the girls poured into the building. Mr. Dow loosened a puncheon in the floor and took from his secret cupboard a peck of rosy apples and a brown jug full of cider. In addition to this he brought forth a rude basket filled with doughnuts. In a

few seconds there were no happier children in the whole west than the boys and girls of the Panther Creek school.

Long was the tale of that barring-out told through the timber, and devoted were all the boys to the master from that day. The only one who had suffered at all was Old Pansy, on whose cascade of capes Jimmie had spilled a cup of cider.

"But then," said Old Pansy, as she brewed her herbs, "I reckon it was worth it."

THE PERILOUS CAPTURE OF SUKEY MATILDA

ONCE upon a time, a great, great many years ago, two little girls stood on opposite banks of a muddy winding river in the western wilderness. The river was the Sangamon, and the little girls were Harriet Stevens and little Lucy Ward. It was a lovely morning in June, but the beauty of the day seemed in no wise to have stirred the hearts of the small maidens. I grieve to say that they were making faces at each other in the most unlovely fashion.

"Yank! Yank! Yank!" taunted Lucy from the south side of the river.

The handful of people making up the Ward settlement were from Tennessee and the Carolinas. Those of the Stevens settlement were from Virginia, Ohio, and New York.

They lived on the north side of the river. A mild form of feud existed between the two groups.

"Go into the house before the Injuns get you," retorted Harriet, shaking passionately the alder branches where she stood, so that a shower of white flakes fell down into the water. "You know you stepped on my farm a-purpose, and I'm never going to play with you again."

"No one wants you-all to," said little Lucy, dancing lightly on the yellow sand. "And *I'm* going in the house, and *I'm* going to have some gooseberry pie."

She danced away. Small Harriet watched her. Then she sat glumly down at the foot of the alder bush. Her heart was very angry, for Lucy was her best friend, in spite of the fact that the two families were mild enemies. The two children crossed the river, which was unusually low that year, by means of a huge oak which had fallen across the bed. They had made a play-

house in a little wild plum thicket, and crept there day by day. These visits were not frowned upon by their parents and relatives, probably because each little maid came back with so much gossip. At that time there were practically no newspapers or letters, and the coming of a stranger was a great event.

"She smashed my farm a-purpose," said Harriet bitterly. They had made beautiful farms in the yellow river sand, building their rail fences of twigs, and sticking in blades of grass for the Indian corn. Little Lucy, suddenly seeing that Harriet's farm was much the bigger and grander, in her pretended search for little white pebbles for baby pigs, promptly set her foot on it, ruining the entire corn crop. Immediately Harriet ran home.

She rose now and went into the cabin. Both doors were open, and the greased paper taken from the windows. The little girl went up to her mother, who was

spinning in the corner. Her oldest sister sat by the table stemming wild gooseberries.

"I want a piece of corn pone," announced the child.

"Are you hungry already? Well, get yourself a piece from the big noggen. There's some fresh honey in the jar."

A noggen was a wooden vessel, dug out and occasionally coppered, used for a bowl in those days.

"I don't b'lieve I want honey, Mother."

Harriet took the cold corn pone and crept back the quarter of a mile to the river. She hid behind the alder bush when she got there. From her hiding place she saw the seven men of the Ward family leave with their guns for a squirrel hunt. In a few minutes the rest of the Ward settlement, three women and six girls of assorted sizes, came forth with noggens and homemade baskets. They were going out to hunt wild raspberries. Harriet saw little Lucy flaunt

her scanty skirt as she gazed across the river toward the Stevens settlement.

"Go on," said Harriet grimly. "I'm just wanting you to go away. When you come back, Miss Lucy, you'll wish you hadn't smashed my farm."

She waited until the sound of the voices died away. Then she skipped fearlessly across the log and up to the Ward house, which was built within a stone's throw of the river. Her plan was this: she would catch Sukey Matilda, little Lucy's pet hen, carry her down the river for some distance, and tie her to a tree. Then she would hurry home before any wild animal had time to eat the hen, and return with one of her family's rough chicken coops. Into this she would thrust Sukey and keep her until Lucy should weep scalding tears for a week. Finally, when she was sufficiently humbled, Harriet would give back the fat, fussy hen.

Sammy was sitting in the doorway of the Ward house, eating maple sugar. She knew

he would be somewhere about. Sammy was "not quite bright"; he could not talk although he was eleven years old, and he was of no use to work. He was usually left at home when his people went nutting or berrying, as he often got lost or found something to cry about for miles. On the other hand, he never injured himself or got into trouble when he was left alone, although the family were careful not to be away from him very long. He welcomed Harriet now with a smiling grunt, and offered her some maple sugar. Harriet took it greedily and sat down beside Sammy on the doorsill. She ate slowly and with great delight, for their own maple sugar had disappeared long ago. Her eyes roved about the neat little clearing as she rolled the last bit of sweetness on her tongue. Suddenly her scalp lifted and her blood seemed to freeze, for in a gap in the timber a half mile away she saw an Indian! Presently he was joined by seven or eight more.

The few remaining Kickapoos at that time were not dangerous. They were at peace with the whites, but they usually stole everything they could lay hands on. Surely they were headed now for the Ward settlement. Harriet realized instantly that they must have seen the owners depart, and were now ready to raid as they pleased. She must warn her own people, lest the savages ford the river farther down and carry off the stock unobserved. The men in her family, four in number, had gone to the mill fifteen miles to the west, and would not be back until dark.

What should she do? She must think quickly. She would not give up her cherished plan of revenge. She could see Sukey Matilda sunning herself in the dust by the log smokehouse. For a moment the child looked wildly about. Then her eyes came back to the smiling Sammy, still munching sugar.

"Sammy!" she whispered. "The Indians

are coming! Go tell my people, while I shut up your cows!"

Sammy smiled.

"The Indians'll burn you alive if you don't! They'll scalp you!"

Sammy gurgled joyfully.

"Oh!" cried the little girl in despair. Suddenly a thought came to her. She remembered Sammy's bellow when things went wrong with him. She snatched the maple sugar from the boy's hand and ran with it to the log. He gave a surprised roar, and followed. She tolled him across the river and up the other bank, then halfway to her own house. When she reached the big hickory, she threw the sugar, as hard and far as she could, toward her own cabin.

"They'll hear him yelling," she reasoned swiftly, "and come out to see what's the matter. He's not been across there for months. And he won't find that sugar very soon. Then they'll see the Indians, maybe."

She had not planned in vain. Her sturdy

little arm had indeed sent the maple cake far, and with an outraged bellow Sammy raced after it. Harriet listened long enough to hear the sound of excited voices coming toward him. Then she dropped on her hands and knees, and so crawled back across the river and toward the house of the enemies. She had never before in all her life been so frightened, but she meant to have Sukey Matilda. The savages had not yet appeared. In a few swift leaps she reached the little stockade. In it there were two horses and cows, besides the ever useful yoke of oxen and a dozen squealing pigs. She pulled the heavy door to, and swung the heavy bar in place on the inside. Next she ran to the log barn which stood on one side of the stockade, and with difficulty lifted a trap-door in the floor. The Wards were proud of their excellent barn, and little Lucy had often boasted to her playmate of this door and the winding underground passage to the house. This was not made so much for

a retreat from the Indians as it was for a safe passage to the barn in the time of heavy snows.

Harriet crept along this dark underground corridor, her heart thumping madly. Luckily the way was short. Finally she felt the door which opened in a side of the big cabin. She could not push it open! Yet Lucy had said that they did not keep it locked!

Finally the door gave an inch, and she realized that some article of heavy home-made furniture had been placed against it. She gritted her teeth and pushed again, harder—harder—harder. At last the door grudgingly opened, and she crept out into the single large room. She crawled across the floor and fearfully peered out the window. The yard was full of redskins. They were motioning angrily over the locked stockade and evidently planning some means of breaking into it. As she looked, one of them triumphantly caught Sukey Matilda

by one leg and dangled the hen in the air. Following his example, several other Indians began chasing chickens around the yard,

until the squawkings, mixed with redskin gutturals, made Harriet shake in her shoes. She began to fear indeed for her own safety, and to long for her mother's arms. In a moment the savages might come to the house. What would they do to her when they found her? They would know she had barred the stockade. She dared not close the cabin door now, for that would attract their attention.

Suddenly she saw the big clock in the corner. This great carved clock had come from England, and was the pride of the Ward family. Out of a little house every hour, came one of the twelve disciples and struck

the time on a silver bell. The timepiece locked with a huge key. Little Lucy had said that the key always hung on a rawhide string in one corner of the room. Over it was a sunbonnet.

Harriet crept on her stomach across the floor, and then rose cautiously to her feet. She felt about with shaking fingers. The key was there!

She crawled back across the room and unlocked the clock door, inserting the key on the inside of the lock. Just as she was stepping into her hiding place, she heard a wild commotion outside, and into the house came running Sukey Matilda, squawking madly, her wings outspread. She ran straight into Harriet, who promptly covered her with her calico skirt, and then shrank back into the clock. She had no more than locked the door, when she heard one of the Kickapoos grunt in the cabin. Then there were other grunts, and she guessed that the room had filled with savages, seek-

ing food and plunder. In spite of herself, Harriet giggled a tiny scared giggle as she tried to imagine how the pursuer of the hen looked when he entered the room and found that the hen had vanished into thin air. The little girl had almost to strangle the chicken to keep her quiet, for Sukey was determined to tell her woes to the whole world. Then, just as the child thought she would smother in the warm darkness, she heard the excited shout of white men's voices, and knew that she was safe. She opened the clock door and stepped weakly out, while the long-suffering Sukey shot out into the yard, where she flew up into a tree and cackled wildly for a full half hour. Her rescuer was questioned again and again.

"Oh, Hattie!" cried Lucy. "You saved Sukey Matilda for me! And the Indians took every other chicken on the place! I'll never, never spoil anything of yours again!"

Then Lucy's father, big John Ward, in

his joy swung Harriet to the ceiling. When he put her down, Mrs. Ward filled a little noggen for her with maple sugar, and took her home.

The Indians had secured nothing but the chickens and a crippled pig which had somehow escaped the fold. The men of the settlement had come just in the nick of time; they had fired a few scattered shots at the fleeing savages, but seeing that the redskins had no large amount of plunder, to avoid serious trouble, they let them go in peace.

They saw Harriet's mother, armed with a shotgun, coming down to the river, as they crossed on the log. She cried out in relief when she saw that the child was safe. Guessing from Sammy's unusual appearance on the scene that something was wrong across the river, she had locked Sammy and the members of her family in a cave off the cabin, and had bravely started out to find her daughter, and to help her neighbors.

After that the two little settlements, each with its groups of families all closely related, lived peaceably side by side, and Harriet and little Lucy began farming again in the yellow sand of the river.

LITTLE KATE AND BOUNCING BEN

THE rain poured down the sitting room windows as though it would never stop. The asphalt pavement in front of the house was a shining, hurrying river, and the boy who came dismally along to light the old-fashioned street lamps looked, as the cook said, like a drowned rat.

Two small noses were pressed against the big window in the sitting room, and two little voices wailed aloud at a lost Saturday. Any Saturday was "lost" to the Densmore twins, if it rained, for then they could not play outdoors.

"Oh, my!" sighed little Katharine. "Five o'clock, and pouring still! It's 'most as bad as going to school, a day like this is."

Katharine and Benjamin went to the training school in the School of Education

of the big university in which their father was a professor. They rode to school in a pretty limousine with lavender cushions, and Nora, their nurse, always went with them. They did not really dislike school, but they infinitely preferred their summers on the old farm in Ohio to any wonders which winter in the city brought to them.

"Don't say school," said Ben crossly. "I hate school. I wish the old school would burn down."

Grandmother looked up from her work. She was knitting little jackets for the Belgian babies who had lost their fathers in the war.

"Bring your chairs up to the fire," said Grandmother comfortably, "and I'll tell you a story about two children I once knew. Their names were — yes, truly — Little Kate and Bouncing Ben."

"Oh, Grandma!"

In a moment there were two small heads at her knee, and Grandmother, dropping

her ivory knitting needles, folded her hands in her lap and began:

"Now what do you think? Once upon a time this state was covered with heavy timber. In this timber there were wolves and foxes and deer, and, for a time, even Indians. After the early settlers had made their log cabins, they drove off the Indians and killed most of the wolves; then they began to build schoolhouses for their little children.

"I'm going to tell you about the one to which Little Kate and Bouncing Ben went, oh, years and years ago."

"Did they ride to school?" asked Kate. "I s'pose they went in a farm wagon."

"No, they had to walk. And they walked two and one half miles twice a day, every day, through thick swampy timber, and across a creek. There weren't any wolves or bears in the timber, but there were poisonous snakes, even rattlesnakes, and Little Ben always carried a club almost as big as himself.

"One evening as the children were going home, they saw a huge snake lying in the path. It was brown with yellow spots on it, and at least four feet long. Benjy, it was as big around as my two arms put together, and its head was as large as a man's fist."

"Oh, Grandma! What did Little Ben do?"

"In those days children were not so afraid of snakes as they are to-day, and these children began to tease the reptile. They threw stones and clods at it, and Ben ran toward it with his club. The snake was coiled, but when he ran at it, it struck at him. Then it coiled again. No matter from which direction the children tried to approach it, the snake turned its head that way and fought. Finally it darted its tongue at them so fiercely and sprang so angrily that even Little Ben was frightened. He snatched Kate's hand and they flew home like the wind."

"I would have killed it," said Benjy seri-

ously, after a long pause. "But do go on, Grandmother!"

"The schoolhouse stood in a little valley. It was made of unhewn logs and covered with boards which were held in place by poles, called weight poles. Some of the better buildings of the time had floors of rough-hewn puncheon, but there was no floor to this schoolhouse — think of that, Kittykins! And for windows, they left out a log and pasted greased paper over the opening to let in the light. This paper was greased with wild turkey oil. There was no glass in that little settlement. The chimney was made of mud and sticks, and every crack in the building was filled with clay to keep out the wind."

"What kind of desks did they have?" asked Benjamin.

"The desks were just rough, low shelves placed on pins driven slantingly into the wall," and Grandma illustrated with her hands. "The seats were made of split logs

with wooden pins driven into them for legs. They had no backs at all."

"How did the children keep warm, Grandma?"

"In one end of the room there was a big fireplace which burned short logs. The big boys of the school brought these logs in every day. The pupils always gathered around the fire to eat their lunches."

"I think that was a dreadful school," said little Katharine.

"No, it wasn't, dear. Your great-grandmother didn't think so. Nor did your great-grandfather."

"Are you telling about *them?*" cried the boy. "Do go on, Grandmother!"

"What did Great-grandmother have to eat at noon?" asked Katharine with interest.

"Ah, I don't like to think of that. You see, when Kate was a baby, her father leased a farm and started to Missouri to make his fortune. He didn't make it, and came back in a few years. The man to whom he had

leased the farm for three years refused to give it up, and for a long time Kate's family were very poor. I am afraid that all Kate had to eat for a long time was cornbread, made without eggs, crab apple preserves, made with molasses instead of sugar, and now and then wild plum butter. She sat off by herself when she could, so that the rest of the pupils couldn't see how little she had."

"Oh–h!"

"What did Ben have to eat?" asked the little boy.

"Ben's family were prosperous. Little Ben was so round that his mother called him Bouncing Ben. He brought meat and pie and even cake. Many times he shared his lunch with Little Kate."

"Did Kate have to sew in that school, Grandma?" asked Katharine. "How could a man teach you to sew?"

"He didn't. They didn't teach cooking and sewing and manual training in those days. These children I am telling you about

studied writing, arithmetic, and reading. Run upstairs to my room, Benjy, and ask Martha to give you the book lying on my desk. I came across it in an old trunk in the attic this morning."

Benjy flew upstairs. He was soon back with the book, which he held out carefully before him.

"In the year 1830 books were very, very scarce and expensive. This arithmetic cost five dollars, and it's all made by hand. It was Ben's, but later he gave it to Kate. You see it's just the size to carry in the side pocket of a coat. There are ninety-one pages in it, and every problem is written in a beautiful flowing hand.

"First, as we open the book, we find the definition of arithmetic. 'Arithmetic is the art of computing by numbers.' Then the maker takes up addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. Later you find tables of weights and measures, single and double rule of three, and vulgar and decimal fractions.

"It's bound in leather, and was used in the old Field school, in Campbell county, Virginia, before it came to the wilderness. On each large Southern plantation there was usually one man trained to make shoes for everybody there, and I suppose some such man bound this book. Can't you imagine some schoolmaster carefully writing it, page upon page, by the light of a tallow candle? And can't you imagine the delight of some little boy when the book was given to him?"

"Katharine, here's a problem in verse," cried Benjamin, who had been turning through the book. "Read it, please, Grandma."

"An ingot of silver that weighed three pounds
Was sent by a smith to be made into spoons.
The number returned was seven times three,
Each an ounce and ten grains as near as could be.
Now, answer my question, forget not the rhyme,
And tell me what silver and dross were behind."

"I don't believe that Miss Dudley, my teacher, could work that," said Benjamin seriously.

"Now let me tell you some more about Great-grandmother's school. Mr. Peyton, the schoolmaster, believed in what was called the 'loud school.' He had all the children recite their lessons at once, and at the top of their voices. Sometimes, while the whole school was shouting, he took down his fiddle and played *Old Zip Coon* as fast as he could."

"I'd like to go to that kind of school," cried Benjamin, with shining eyes.

"But sometimes he took down something other than a fiddle. On two wooden pins behind his desk there were several hickory rods. If you didn't work, you got two blows from one of these. If you fought, you got ten."

"And if you didn't know your lessons?"

"Then you might get one or you might get a dozen. You mustn't blame the schoolmaster too much, though. Often his pupils were large and headstrong, and he had to make them obey.

"Mr. Peyton chopped timber at night and on Saturdays to help make a living. He was not paid in money for his teaching, but in dried pumpkin, buckwheat, corn, dried apples, hams—any farm produce, in fact. At the end of a term Ben saw him load all his collection into a farm wagon and drive to Chicago, fifty miles away. There he traded it for the things he needed."

There was a little silence while Grandmother's small listeners leaned harder on her knee as they considered gravely the shopping trip of a schoolmaster of long ago.

"What did Great-grandmother and Great-grandfather do at noon, and at recess?" asked Benjamin finally.

"The children had only an hour at noon, for in summer school began at seven o'clock, and in winter at half past seven. This was so that the children who lived several miles away could get home before dark. Sometimes at noon the girls sought out a beautiful spot in the woods and made

playhouses. They made beds out of sassafras and hickory leaves, and used a stump for a table, if one was near. Acorns furnished them cups and saucers. Sometimes the bigger girls carried moss and carefully packed it down firmly for carpets.

"The boys usually played what they called 'Town Ball.' It was a great deal like the baseball of to-day. They never tired of it. In the winter they threw snowballs and coasted downhill on homemade sleds. In the spring they hunted green hickory buds to eat, and the sassafras shoots where they came up fresh and tender. In the fall they hunted paw-paws, and persimmons, as well as walnuts, hazel nuts, and hickory nuts."

"Oh-h," breathed Benjamin again, "how I wish I had lived then! Tell us some more, Grandmother."

"No, not to-night," smiled the dear old lady, putting away her knitting, "for I hear your father's step. But the next rainy

day that comes I'll show you Little Kate's button string (charm string they called it then) and tell you all about it. Now kiss your father and ask him if he can work the problem in Bouncing Ben's arithmetic."

And with a shout the children obeyed.

A VILLAGE FRANKLIN

THIS is the true story of a boy who was always trying to invent something. This boy, William Bramble, lived in the Middle West in those early days when the black bear and the prairie wolf prowled over the country. The driving back of these and other animals and the wresting of a living from the soil were thoughts which hardly ever entered William's mind. Day and night this boy dreamed in terms of mechanics, and week after week he became more and more of a problem to his mother and father. They needed his help in the new country to which they had emigrated from Maryland.

William's father finally gave up farming and kept an inn. He moved several times, every time starting to run a new tavern in a new town. Now he wished for his son's

help more than ever. A twelve-year-old boy would be very useful in watering and feeding the horses of travelers, in waiting on the table, and in running errands. At the busiest times, however, the innkeeper usually found his son — if he found him at all — tinkering over some rough bit of machinery. Sometimes he was drawing with a bit of charcoal on a fairly smooth board. In those days a smooth board was hard to find.

At last William's father bought a farm, and went to live on it with his wife and four children. Here William was of a little more use, but his father felt disappointed in him still. Even the mother grew tired of the boy's various mechanical contrivances, which always fell short of working.

When William was seventeen, his father died, and he had to give up his dreaming and face the future seriously. For two years he turned his attention to farming, and all the good folk of the neighborhood nodded their heads in approval. When he was nine-

teen he married a pretty young wife with a face like a violet. He decided to keep on farming, for, in spite of the hard work, he began to take great pride in the fields which he and his young bride plowed with the slow oxen. But his mind was too full of machines and machinery, however, and the rail fences which the stock knocked down were never put back. His pigs got out of their pen and nosed in contentment all over the farm, while some of them even ran away into the woods and became wild pigs. Finally one of his oxen died, and the young couple then felt very sad and hopeless.

About 1841, however, the neighbors saw the fruit of William's lonely nights spent in a corner of the barn, for he worked there continually, by the light of a rude lantern. He had made a cultivator, a machine for plowing corn, which was really successful. In pride and joy he patented it. His young wife lifted her head high once more, and she blossomed out in a new calico dress and a

straw bonnet with blue flowers on it. It tied with blue ribbons under her chin. Then William was an honored man in the community. He began to repair his rail fences, and he talked of buying another ox.

The cultivator was a great success, and money began to pour in upon the inventor. He determined to sell the little farm and move to Lafayette, a town in Indiana, where he would keep a grand inn, as his father had done before him. The farm was sold to a young man who had pushed northward from the mountains of Kentucky. William and his wife moved to town and William built his tavern. He named it Fountain Rise, and for a few years he ran it with a fair degree of success. The stagecoach dropped at its hospitable door many a weary traveler who was glad to step into the warm kitchen, sniff the fragrance of the meat on the spit, and think of high, warm, clean featherbeds awaiting tired bodies in the rooms above. Bramble now hired people to do most of

the work, while he toiled over another invention. This was a grain scale by which grain could be measured and weighed. He grew more and more wrapped up in this, and the light burned in his little back room hours in the night.

"Bramble is crazy," the townsfolk began to say. His wife no longer had pretty calico dresses and bonnets with bright ribbons. She worked harder than ever to make the inn a success, and to cover up her husband's failures in management. The money received for the sale of the farm was all gone.

For eleven long, long years William worked at his grain scale, adding to it, taking away, until there was quite a scrapheap of machinery in one corner of the stable. He had again moved his workshop to the barn.

Then, one glad fall day, he placed on exhibition a grain scale which not only measured grain, but gave the number of bushels and calculated the amount the grain came to at the current price! You can

imagine how the people crowded around the successful inventor. They shook hands with him; they shouted his name; they carried him on their shoulders from one end of the village to the other. His wife went down on her knees in her bedroom and thanked God that William's tinkering had come to something at last.

In six weeks William had sold $47,000 worth of "rights to territory." With the gains he built a big hotel called the Bramble House. This was the biggest inn thereabouts. But alas! His joy was short-lived. His scale worked all right for small quantities of grain, but not for large ones. Because of this failure, the Bramble House was swept away. As William was a true and honest man, he gave their money back to the buyers. He was left without a dollar, and he and his wife had to face once more the problem of making a living. Luckily for the man, a friend of his, a banker, came to him at this time.

"William," said he, "if you had time, all the time you wished, could you remedy the faults in your scale?"

"Indeed I could," replied the inventor eagerly.

Mr. Reynolds gave him a check for two thousand dollars, and told him to go on with the good work. In five weeks the inventor had made a machine which worked without a flaw. This new scale weighed all grain poured into the hopper, discharged itself while the wheat was still running, and kept its own accounts. The machinery was very simple. William at once took out several patents to cover the invention and its improvements. He also opened an office, and in a short time he sold many thousand 'dollars' worth of rights. He was cheated out of the most of this money by his partner, a man who had scarcely a dollar when he was taken into partnership.

Still undaunted, the inventor exhibited his scale in every state in the Union. It

won a medal at the New York American Institute. At the World's Fair in Crystal Palace, New York, he was given the best location, and his exhibit drew immense crowds.

Later William sent a man to Europe to take out patents in his name, but the man was never heard of again. It seemed as if disaster must follow every move William made.

Finally he determined to go farther west. This was in 1857. He located in Ohio, then a wilderness partly covered with water. Finding this hardly endurable, he forged on to Decatur, Illinois. Decatur was then a tiny thriving village in the unsettled country. Something in the town attracted the hapless young man. He decided to locate there, although he did not know a single person in the place. He had no money, either, but the sale of some beautiful furniture he had saved, brought him a small sum. With this he bought a tiny patch

of ground and built a rough shed without a floor. Into this shed he moved a costly piano and other pieces of beautiful and graceful furniture. Many a curious Decatur housewife looked in to see his mahogany highboy and polished table.

From then on, some measure of success followed his efforts. He put aside, as nearly as he could, all thoughts of inventing, and with his two sons began making bricks! It was his first experience, but he did it well, and he and his sons built with their own hands a fine brick house.

He could not long keep his mind off machinery, however. He patented an improved bedstead, Bramble's Spring Rockaway Bed. Some of your great-grandmothers have slept on these beds.

Next he invented a post office lock box, and had it patented. He showed it to a postmaster in Boston, who agreed to use it. A lock manufacturer in Connecticut adopted his ideas, even though Bramble had a patent,

and began manufacturing boxes. Out of this grew a contest, and afterwards Mr. Bramble brought suit in the United States courts. A compromise was made, and after that William received a royalty on every post office box sold in the United States. He invented a complete line of door locks and padlocks; these were said to be the best ever sold in our country.

Decatur is now a roaring, thriving city, and William's Rockaway Bed and Yale lock are now either forgotten or else accepted as a matter of course. The story of his grit and perseverance in those early days can never be wholly forgotten, however, and the town still points proudly to her village Franklin.

A CHRISTMAS OF LONG AGO

In the fall of 1822, a "Virginia wagon" stopped in the neighborhood of a beautiful grove near the central part of Illinois. From this wagon descended a pioneer and his family, bravely gazing about at the unsettled country which was to be their new home. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Hollingsworth there were two children, a boy aged four, and little Susan, a dumpling only a year old. Mr. Hollingsworth's brother, Jason, accompanied him also. The children were fretful after their long journey through the wilderness, but the mother and father, as tired as they were, stood gazing at the glorious coloring spread before them. The oaks were a mighty blaze of red and orange, and the maples were each a flaming sunset. Up the trunks of the trees ran the scarlet wood-

bine, and in a tangled thicket of wild crab apples they saw the lovely berries of the bittersweet.

"Let us build here," said Mrs. Hollingsworth, gently hushing the child in her arms.

"No place could be prettier," answered her husband. "I hear a spring trickling, too. We will have water near at hand."

Immediately the two men set to work to build a "linn bark camp" in which they would live until the cabin could be built. This was a rough structure with three closed sides; the floor and roof were made of linn bark. It furnished a fair protection in case of bad weather, and kept off the heavy dews.

In a short time a tiny cabin was ready for the family, and Mrs. Hollingsworth happily spread her great ticks of goose feathers on the rude beds and covered them with her bright patchwork quilts. Mr. Hollingsworth killed wild turkeys for oil for a homemade lamp, which was made by placing a twisted flannel strip in a saucer of oil.

It was while the men were building a rail fence that the first hint of trouble came. Out of the timber, without warning, rode a group of Indian braves. They were not in war paint, but they were plainly hostile. The leader was Machina, the chief of the Kickapoos. Dressed in his scarlet blanket, he strode up to the white men, muttering. At the same time he threw a handful of maple leaves into the air.

"What does he mean?" cried Mrs. Hollingsworth in terror.

Her husband's face was grave as he answered. "He is jealous because we have come here. He says that we must go to the other side of the river before the leaves fall, or the Kickapoos will kill all the "bootanas (white men)."

Still muttering, Machina and his stalwart braves went back into the forest.

Then what anxious days for the pioneers! There was not a house between them and Chicago, one hundred and fifty miles away.

He Threw a Handful of Maple Leaves into the Air.

They must depend upon themselves in case of attack. The men seldom went far from the cabin, and they taught Mrs. Hollingsworth how to handle a shotgun. The matter was reported to the Indian agent thirty miles to the south, and he said that, although the chief had signed a treaty giving up the lands to the whites, he had refused to abide by it. He had been too ill to treat with the men himself, and had sent his son, who had signed the articles giving up the land. When the Indian agent told Machina this, the chief said, "My heart did not go with it."

"We cannot leave," said Mr. Hollingsworth. "We can't start back at this time of the year. And if we crossed the Sangamon, we wouldn't be any safer, probably."

So the days wore on. In the late fall, fifteen Indians, carrying a deer which they had killed, camped in front of the little house. Mrs. Hollingsworth was at first crazed with fright. She rushed out of the

cabin and pointed at the oak leaves, which were still hanging on the trees.

"No, no!" she cried. "Leaves no fall yet! Go away!"

The Indians grunted, and began to get ready their supper. Old Machina sullenly borrowed a kettle from the white woman. Into this he dropped the head of the deer and boiled it for a short time. Then he made broth by mixing in meal, and the stolid Indians ate their supper. Evidently they were not bent on mischief.

All the fore part of the winter the Kickapoos camped in front of the cabin, and the little family now no longer feared them. Two of the squaws, "Aunt Peggy" and "Aunt Nancy," soon grew fond of the baby, and they made her tiny buckskin clothes.

The twelfth of December, Jason rode fifty miles to the south and came back with a bride, apple-cheeked Keturah Pancake, who had come with her family from Tennessee.

The young husband and wife were to live with the Hollingsworths during the winter.

That night as they sat before the great fireplace, Keturah confessed that she had never in any way celebrated Christmas, and that she had never given or received a Christmas present.

"Dear heart alive!" cried Mrs. Hollingsworth. "Can that be true?"

"It's true," said Keturah smiling. "There were always so many of us, and father was so poor, that we never even dreamed of presents. We always tried to have a little better dinner than usual on Christmas Day, and that was all. Sometimes we didn't even have that."

Mrs. Hollingsworth said no more, but she lay awake long that night, planning a wilderness Christmas for her small family. She did not have many days in which to work, but she thought that she could in some way make a small gift for every one. Finally she fell asleep.

The next day, while her husband and the young people were in the woods, she took from her big chest in the corner her most prized possession. She looked at it with her head on one side and smiled at it a bit sadly. Yes, it must go to Keturah, for of course she could not get to town before the holiday to sell any more butter. Butter brought seven cents in trade at that time of the year.

When she had closed the chest, she took down from a peg on the outside of the house, a big buckskin. This she began to tan by soaking it in weak lye water in a rough trough dug out of a log. After this was finished, she scraped the skin with a sharp knife to take off the hair and the grain. Next she soaked it a long time in the brains of a deer which old Machina obligingly gave her. Last of all, she washed it in soapsuds and laboriously colored it by smoking it.

"Aunt Peggy" now took the skin, and, by rubbing it and pulling it, she made it

soft and smooth. Then, sitting down in front of the great fireplace, she cut out and made for little Jared a suit of buckskin clothes such as little Indian boys wore. When it was fringed and beaded with a few precious blue beads, it was put away until Christmas morning. Little Jared had by this time become so used to the Indians that he did not pay any attention to Aunt Peggy as she worked by the fire.

Next, with Keturah's help, Mrs. Hollingsworth made a buckskin shirt for her husband and his brother. These they dyed with walnut hulls and hickory smoke, and when they were finished they were placed in the big chest with Jared's gift and the precious package for Keturah.

It was now the day before Christmas.

"I will get some prairie chickens," said Mr. Hollingsworth, taking down his shotgun.

He was hastening along on the crust of the snow, when he saw in the distance a number of the birds he wished. To reach

them he had to cross a small slough. Just as he reached the middle of this, the crust broke, and he went down. He threw his gun on the top of the crust, and tried to work loose. The more he worked, the deeper down he went, until finally the snow closed over his head. He was desperate for a moment. Then he struggled until he had packed enough snow beneath him to gain a firm foothold. He continued to pack the snow until he rose high enough to crawl out upon the crust. The thin sunlight lay everywhere; it was a beautiful day; and only the hole in the snow bore witness to his disaster.

Mr. Hollingsworth went on his way, and before evening came, he had a great string of prairie chickens. He went home by a different route, to avoid the slough, and handed the game to his wife. Some of them she would hang up to dry, but most of them would be used for the long-expected Christmas dinner. Of his accident he said noth-

ing; he simply gave the children an extra dance on his knee.

The great event of that evening was the bringing in of the Christmas log. The cabin, which was about twenty-five feet square, had been built with doors opposite each other on the west and east, and an immense fireplace on the south. This fireplace would actually hold logs twenty feet long and two or three feet thick.

Mr. Hollingsworth brought from the stable his four yokes of oxen. With these he dragged a great log toward the cabin. One end of this log was dragged as near the east door as it could be got by pulling it at right angles. Then the men went with the oxen to the other side of the house and passed a log chain from the animals through the door, across the house, and out to the end of the log, where it was attached. Then the oxen pulled the log into the house, end foremost. After that the two men, with the help of the Indians, rolled it into place.

"It will burn from five to seven days," said Mrs. Hollingsworth contentedly.

They went to bed early on Christmas eve, for the next morning they were to ride twenty miles through the woods to a small settlement south of them. Here for the first time Christmas exercises were to be held in a tiny log church. They must start very early in order to be there on time, and to get back in time to have the big Christmas dinner in the early part of the afternoon.

After all, Keturah was the first one up the next morning. She silently crept from her bed in the loft and dressed with shaking fingers. It was not yet daylight as she drew from under her bed a basketful of bittersweet berries and the great scarlet hips of the wild rose, which in that part of the country grew higher than Jason's head. With her treasures she crept down the ladder from the loft and crouched on her knees before the smoldering log. With a little

punching and a little blowing she soon had a merry blaze at one end of the fireplace, and in the warmth of this she basked for some time. In the other end of the room slept the Hollingsworths, all unaware that a Christmas angel was on their hearth.

As soon as the first hint of dawn crept into the room, Keturah poked the fire harder, and by its light she plied busy fingers. By means of homespun thread she made four lovely wreaths of bittersweet berries, and two of rosehips. One such bittersweet wreath as hers exhibited in a florist's window to-day, at least in the Middle West, would attract endless attention and bring a fabulous sum, for the scarlet and orange berries are seldom found now.

Just as Keturah had hung the last lovely wreath over a corner of the settle, small Jared opened his round eyes and bounced out of bed. Immediately the whole family awoke. Then what a crying of "Christmas Gift" from loft and first floor! What a

hurrying into clothes; what a breathing upon frosty fingers! Mr. Hollingsworth poked at the great log until the sparks flew madly up the chimney, and the great chain across the fireplace swayed slowly to and fro. On this chain would be hung the pots in which the dinner should cook.

When he had given one glance at the sky, Mr. Hollingsworth shook his head. It was a dark gray, and already thick snow was falling. The Indian tepees were white.

"We can't go to the services," he said regretfully, "for it's going to snow hard, and we might get lost coming back."

There was great disappointment in the cabin then, but the pioneers of those days accepted things without whining. These of Blooming Grove ate their mush and milk cheerfully, admired the wreaths, and sat about the hearth cracking walnuts and eating apples.

Soon it was time to get dinner. The two women fried the prairie chickens, stewing

a few of the older ones. They stewed, too, the "pumpkin leather" and the "peach leather" which they had taken down from the loft the day before. In those days there were no glass cans in which to preserve fruit for the winter. The man of the house made several smooth boards. The pumpkin or peach was "stewed down," and then spread thinly on the boards to dry. When dry, it was called "leather."

From the loft, too, came the wild potatoes which had grown in the creek bottoms and the sloughs. These were little black things about the size of an egg, and they were especially good when roasted. They had a different flavor from Irish potatoes. Little Jared was very fond of them. "Taters," he called them.

Keturah flew busily about, just as if she had always worked in this cabin near the river. She made one laughable mistake, although it did not seem funny to the family for several days afterward. A peddler—

and peddlers were about as rare at that time as wandering knights — had sold to Mrs. Hollingsworth several weeks before a pound of roasted coffee. The family had not tasted coffee since they left Virginia; like the other pioneers, tea made from roots and herbs had furnished their only hot drink. As a great surprise and treat for her husband, Mrs. Hollingsworth had planned a great potful of coffee for dinner. While she was out in the yard, however, Keturah, who had never seen coffee, boiled it along with some venison!

At last the great dinner was ready. The Indians, all but Aunt Nancy, filed in from the yard, shaking themselves with many an "Ugh! Ugh!" and stamping off the snow. At the head of the long table sat the white people; at the foot sat the stolid Kickapoos. Their food was served to them in big kettles, and they ate in native fashion. All the while the snow fell faster and faster, until the forest was a wonderland of white.

After the last morsel had been eaten — and by this time it was three o'clock — the table was cleared and pushed to the north end of the room. Mr. Hollingsworth, who had put on, in honor of the occasion, his best homespun clothes, rose to his feet and lifted his hand for silence.

"My friends," he said, "let us now hear the word of God."

All were immediately silent except old Machina. He sat in one corner jogging the little white papoose upon his knee, all the while singing in a monotone, "He-o, he-o, me-yok-o-ne, me-yok-o-ne."

When the old chief ceased, Mr. Hollingsworth recited from memory the words he had heard at his mother's knee:

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Then there was a brief prayer. Mr. Hollingsworth thanked God for a safe journey through the wilderness, and for the friends who awaited them.

"Bless Thou, O Lord," he called in his deep voice, "these savage hearts that worship with us to-day. Bless Thou the little Christmas child who lies outside. And lead us safely through another year. Amen."

Aunt Nancy had a little Christmas Indian baby! Jared was wild to see it, but his mother said a Christmas baby was too young to receive callers, and that he must wait until New Year's Day.

Then the Christmas presents were given. Jason and Mr. Hollingsworth were delighted with their new shirts, and Jared was so proud of his clothes that he refused to let them be taken away. Keturah had made for every one a small "split" basket (made of thinly split wood) full of walnut taffy. And last of all, Mrs. Hollingsworth gave to her sister-in-law the precious package from the

chest. It was a blue and white calico dress. Keturah's eyes filled with tears as she took it, and she could hardly believe that it was hers.

So the afternoon wore on, until the day was done. The Indians filed back to their tents, and the Hollingsworths gathered around their fire, singing hymns and talking of the days in old Virginia.

Then the Christmas stars came out one by one and shone softly down on the log cabin in the wilderness, and on the tent which sheltered the little Christmas baby.

THE PIASA BIRD

It was a misty day in the year 1673. Down the Mississippi River came two canoes. In each canoe were a white man and several savages. The white men were Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet, the explorers. Both men glanced eagerly about as the canoes shot forward in the light mist of the June day. It seemed as if the rain would be over any minute, and the sun break through the clouds. Suddenly the river turned, and the boats crept like tiny insects on the water past great high rocks which in their length and grandeur filled the explorers with awe. Suddenly one of the Indians pointed at the smooth face of the bluff. The white men stared and then shuddered a little, for the sight that met their eyes was certainly an uncanny one to come across in a wild country. On this bluff were

two painted monsters about the size of a calf. These horrible creatures, on which the boldest savage would gaze but a moment or so, were painted in red, green, and black, and were so carefully drawn that Joliet and Marquette felt sure that no Indian could have painted them. Besides, what human being could reach a place so high as that rock to paint them?

These beings each had a face somewhat like a man's, only it was covered with scales. The horns on their heads were like those of a deer, and each had a beard like a tiger's. The wings were those of a monstrous bird, and the slimy tail was so long that it passed around the body, went up over the head and then back between the legs, ending in the tail of a fish.

Marquette made a drawing of one of these strange birds, but later, unfortunately, this was lost. He and Joliet went on down the river, and it remained for another man, Dr. John Russell, to tell the meaning of the paint-

The Piasa Bird.

ing on the rock. He interpreted the name, "Piasa" as being "the bird that devours men." Then he discovered the following Indian tradition.

Many, many moons before the palefaces came to the green prairie, there lived a bird so big that he could easily carry off in his talons a large deer. One day when hunting was bad, he flew down upon an Indian, and carried him off. From that day on, this terrible bird scorned deer flesh, and always hunted men. No Indian was wily enough to escape his keen red eyes; he would dart suddenly down upon the strongest brave and carry him off to a lonely cave to eat him. Hundreds and hundreds of mighty warriors tried to destroy this bird, but all their shooting, all their snaring, failed. Sometimes every soul in a village was eaten. Then all the tribes of the Illini began crying, "What shall we do?"

Up then rose Ouatogo, their great chief. His fame extended clear beyond the great lakes.

"I will go apart from my tribe," he said. "I will fast in solitude. I will ask the Great Spirit to protect my children from the Piasa."

So Ouatogo went apart. He covered his head with his blanket and fasted. On the last night of the fast, the Great Spirit came to him.

"Select twenty of your bravest warriors," said the Great Spirit. "Arm each with a bow and poisoned arrows. Conceal them near the big bluff; near this place let stand another warrior in the open, a victim for the Piasa. When the Piasa comes, let all the warriors shoot at once as he swoops upon his prey."

When the chief awoke from this dream of the Great Spirit, he thanked him. Then he returned to his tribe and told them his vision.

"I," said Ouatogo, "will be the victim."

You see this great chief was willing to die for his people.

He placed himself in open view on the bluffs. Soon he saw the Piasa bird hovering

in the air. He perched on the cliff and eyed his prey. The chief drew up his manly form to the utmost height, and planting his feet firmly on the earth, he began to chant the death-song of an Indian warrior. The moment after, the Piasa rose into the air, and, swift as the thunderbolt, darted down on his victim. Scarcely had the horrid creature reached his prey before every bow was sprung and every arrow was sent quivering to the feather into his body. The Piasa uttered a fearful scream that sounded far over the opposite side of the river, and expired. Ouatogo was unharmed. Not an arrow, not even the talons of the bird, had touched him. The Master of Life, in admiration of Ouatogo's deed, had held over him an invisible shield.

There was the wildest rejoicing among the Illini, and the brave chief was carried in triumph to the council house, where it was solemnly agreed that, in memory of the great event in their nation's history, the image of the Piasa should be engraved on the bluff.

Even as late as 1836 an Indian never passed the rock without firing his gun at the image of the Piasa. The marks of the balls on the rock were so many that you could not possibly count them.

It is said that Dr. Russell examined a cave which tradition said was one of those to which the terrible bird carried his victims. From the entrance to this cavern you could see the smooth, calm waters of the Mississippi, beneath the rock. In the cavern, however, was a gruesome sight. The floor of the cave was one mass of human bones. Dr. Russell and his guide dug down for a depth of four feet in every part of the cave — it was about twenty by thirty feet — and still found only bones. The skeletons of thousands of people were there.

What is the true story of the Piasa bird? That you and I will probably never know. The secret perished with the red men long, long ago, and all we have is the doubtful tradition of the Illini.

YOUNG JOHN GOES TO MARKET

THERE lived on the prairies long, long ago when the prairie grass grew high, a family named Burchance. In the family there was one son, John, who was a dreamer. His dreams never by any chance took a practical turn. He used to like to watch the dawn come up the sky, and he seldom missed seeing the glorious prairie sunsets fade into the night. He knew all the calls of the birds in the woods from the *peer, peer,* of the Kentucky cardinal to the cry of the Carolina paroquet. In those days the tropical birds came as far north as Illinois, and many and many a time had Young John seen their flaming feathers in the trees. He knew all the habits of the badgers and raccoons, and he could whistle through a quill until the wild turkeys flocked all about him.

But of what real use was this kind of knowledge, questioned his father, Old John. There were trees to cut down (for, like most

He Could Whistle Through a Quill Until the Wild Turkeys Flocked All About Him.

pioneers, the Burchance family had built on the edge of a forest) and there were rails to be split. Young John was very good at taking the grain to mill fifteen miles away — that gave him ample opportunity to gaze

about him and learn more woodland ways. He was very poor at dropping corn and wheat, and a miserable hand at plowing.

"Young John isn't much good," said the hard-working farmers, shaking their heads.

Suddenly Young John woke up. The reason was this. A subscription school had been started among the pioneers in the thinly settled neighborhood, and to this school he wished to go. The building was only a log hut on the hill, with no floor and a fireplace that drew all the heat up the chimney in winter, but the schoolmaster who had been chosen loved wild things, too. He had tamed a bear cub once, and he had found and petted a motherless fawn which would have followed him everywhere if he had permitted it.

"I'd like to go to school," said Young John one morning. He pushed back his cap and looked at his father out of pleasant blue eyes.

"School!" scoffed his father. "What would you do at school? You'd be moonin'

all day over a Grand-daddy-long-legs. Good hard work's the school you need."

Young John pleasantly persisted, however, and the more he persisted, the more wrathful his father grew.

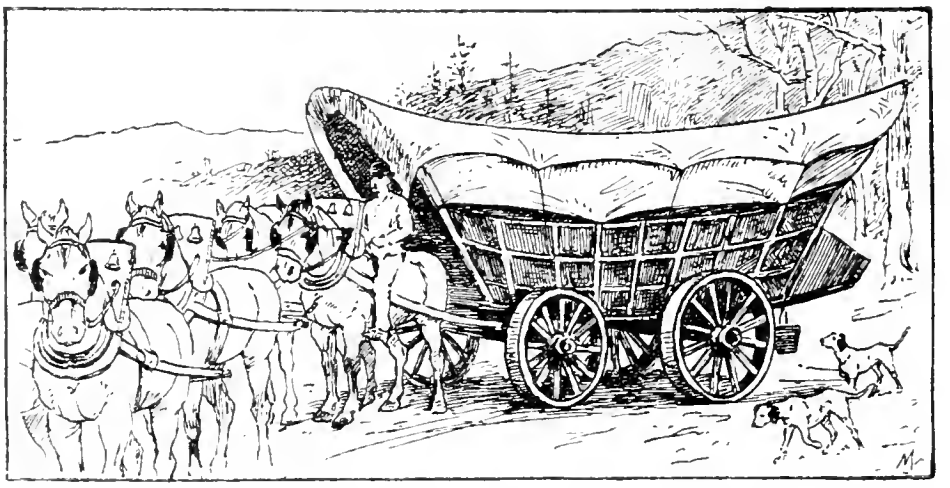
Finally Old John pointed to two ancient geese waddling around the house.

"I'll give you a chance," he said, biting his words short. "If you've got the brains to take those two old pieces of walkin' shoe leather to town and sell 'em for a good price, I'll let you go to school. Now let's hear no more from you."

Then the boy was glad. He sang while he caught the two old comrades (they had come from the south in the covered wagon along with the usual two dogs and a tar-bucket) and swiftly wrung their necks. When he picked off the feathers, he whistled to see how aged the two bodies looked.

"Never mind," said Young John cheerfully, "where there's a will there's a way, I've heard said. Now for market."

It was a beautiful morning in October. A few birds sang gloriously, and on the way to town he counted fifty empty birds' nests.



A Covered Wagon with the Usual Two Dogs and a Tar-bucket.

When he came to the tiny settlement, he found most of the countryside already there. There were even a few Indians who had come to exchange furs for firewater. One squaw had had too much firewater. As she sat stupidly on the ground, Young John roguishly placed a barrel over her.

"Good chemokoman" (good white man), she said, "goodnatos" (good whisky).

Young John went on, and presently he began to cry his wares.

"Goose! Goose! Who wants to buy a fine fat goose? Who'll buy, who'll buy, a fine fat goose?"

Many times he was stopped by women in linsey-woolsey garments, and occasionally by a farmer in homespun blue jeans. Each would-be buyer turned away when he saw how old and tough were the wares Young John wished to sell.

Nothing daunted, he cried again, "Geese, geese, who'll buy my geese?"

At last there came along a dear old lady. Her linsey-woolsey gown was as neat as a pin, and her black bonnet as stiff as a board. She prodded a goose with her forefinger.

"I'll give you ten cents for this one," she said.

"Can't you buy both of them?" asked Young John.

"No," said the little old lady very decidedly.

Now Young John had a smile like sunshine and a pretty way with words. Both

of these he used now. He lifted his cap and bowed.

"My dear madam," he said, "I can't sell one without the other. These poor old geese have been united in life in the most amicable relations for twenty years, and it would be sad to part them now."

The dear old lady was so affected by this speech that she immediately bought both fowls, and Young John went home whistling with twenty cents, which was quite a fortune in those days.

"Well," said his father in amazement, "you've more brains at a bargain than I thought. You may go to school."

And Young John did. One day he took the good old lady a half dozen quails to pay for the ancient geese, and promised her many more. He killed rabbits for her, and squirrels, and now and then he caught a wild turkey. In pioneer days it was necessary for every child to do his part, and Young John, who had hitherto been too soft-hearted to

kill wild game, suddenly began to contribute his share of the family meat, as well as providing some for the surprised old lady.

Young John attended the subscription school diligently. Every night he studied arithmetic with the schoolmaster, so that he might learn more than the other pupils. When he was a little older he gave a man a young colt as payment for the man's staying on the farm and doing Young John's work for him, while Young John went to school at a larger school ten miles away. From this he went to a seminary still farther away, and here he studied land surveying and navigation. When his father gave him a surveyor's compass, there was no happier boy in the whole world.

The little lady who had bought his ancient geese lived to see the bright-eyed lad one of the foremost surveyors in the wilderness, and she never regretted her purchase of the leathery fowls, since it was the means of

helping a boy get an education. But what she did with her bargain she never told. No one knew but her old gray cat, and he only washed his face and looked wise when the subject was mentioned.

THE SUDDEN FREEZE

DID you ever make a wish and have it granted so suddenly that you were almost swept off your feet? Then you will enjoy this story. It is the tale of little Benjamin Cox, who, on the afternoon of a winter day in the year 1836, wished that the creek would freeze over so that he might go skating.

Benjamin lived an eighth of a mile from Money Creek, and two miles from the school. All of Benjy's brothers and sisters went to school, leaving the little boy to amuse himself in the log house while his mother cooked pumpkin leather or spun with her wheel in the corner.

"Oh, *how* I wish that the creek would freeze!" cried Benjy again, for when the creek froze, his mother let him skate every afternoon, and then the winter day did not

seem so long without the presence of his merry brothers and sisters.

"It won't to-day," said his mother, "for it's too warm. Why don't you put on your fur coat and cap and go meet the children as they come from school?"

"Oh, I will, I will!" cried Benjy, and he took down his coat from the peg on the wall.

It was about three o'clock when Benjy started. His fur coat was much too warm, so he took it off. He tied the sleeves around his neck so that he would not loose the garment, and plodded happily on. The ground was covered with wet mud, thin from recent rain and thawing, but Benjy did not mind that. The more mud through which he splashed, the happier was he. He pursed up his red lips in a whistle, and he felt very grown-up and important.

He must have loitered on the way, for they said that the roaring wind came up exactly at four o'clock, and at that time the little boy was still some distance from the school.

He noticed suddenly in the northwest very threatening clouds. Those higher in the sky were very dark, while those below were of a strange, white frosty appearance.

"How queer!" said Benjy aloud to a winter rabbit, who immediately went into his hole.

Suddenly the air seemed to fill with countless tiny particles of mist. At the same moment the child thought he would freeze. The water began to turn to sleet, and the air grew colder and colder.

Benjy passed, on the run, a little pond called Duck Pond. Long needles of ice were shooting across its surface in every direction. How queer it looked!

On and on Benjy raced. A little farther he saw ducks and geese imprisoned in the ice in a brook; they had been caught while paddling. Near the door of the schoolhouse a wandering cow was held fast in the frozen slush in the same way.

Benjy's little heart was by this time beating fast with terror and with the swiftness of

his flight. He sank exhausted to the ground just as the doors of the schoolhouse opened and the pupils came tumbling out.

Then what shouts of astonishment there were at the sight of small Benjy on the ground, and poor Bossy, her four feet held fast in the ice, bawling woefully.

Benjy's big brother Oscar grasped the seriousness of the situation. Flinging Benjy on to his back, he snatched the hand of his youngest sister, and bade the children run home as fast as possible, never stopping a second. The schoolmaster, who had just come out, urged the same thing.

The seven Cox children ran as they had never run before. Soon the mud froze to their shoes so that they could hardly stagger along. Now and then a child fell, but the others helped him up immediately and half dragged, half carried him on.

When the little family finally reached home, more dead than alive, Benjy was unconscious with the cold. In the warm air of

the cabin he quickly revived, and with a big molasses cookie in each red hand, he proudly described the beginning of the unusual change in the weather.

"I said I wished that the creek would freeze, didn't I, Mother?" he said. "Only I 'most froze, too!"

The Sudden Freeze was talked of for years and years after that eventful day; even now you will find people who tell how their grandfathers lived through it. Small animals were frozen in the mud, to die later, unless some pitying hand released them. Everywhere cows, like the poor Jersey by the school, were frozen fast, and had to be cut out before the evening milking.

Chickens curled up and fell off the roost, and the hogs, to get warm, piled up on top of one another as high as they could climb. Many of them smothered to death.

In many places the water froze in ridges as it was blown that way by the wind, presenting a strange sight to the early settlers.

Mr. Cox had gone on an errand a mile away when the freeze began. When he came home he could scarcely get his overcoat off, so stiff was it frozen. When he did get it off, it stood alone on the floor. Mr. Cox had been driving white Sally when the change in the weather occurred. When he got back he found the harness was frozen fast to her, and he could not get it off for two days.

The worst calamity of the freeze occurred in Central Illinois. A man and child were riding across the prairie, when, with a roar, the wind came up. Seeing that escape was impossible on horseback, the man dismounted, and with his knife disemboweled the animal. Then, with the child, he crawled into the warm cavity. The man was frozen to death, but the child lived and was later found by some farmers hurrying home to their families.

Little Benjy never forgot his wish and the sudden answer to it, and when he was an old

man in the chimney corner he used to take an apple-cheeked grandchild on either knee and tell them of the ducks and geese who froze fast in the pond one strange winter day, so long ago.

COMFORT'S WEDDING

ONCE upon a time, a great many years ago, there lived in the western wilderness two young people so good and handsome and true that they were loved by their neighbors for a distance of one hundred miles. The young man's name was Severe Stringfield, and the young woman's name was Comfort Rhodes. Now Severe's disposition did not suit his name, as you may already have guessed, for he was a bright, smiling youth, always ready to do any one a favor. Comfort's name *did* suit her, for a better maid of eighteen never washed the faces of her little brothers and sisters, combed their hair, and taught them to "make their manners."

When Comfort's mother heard that Comfort and Severe were to be married, she immediately put her homespun apron to her

eyes and wept. Then she withdrew it and began to plan the wedding feast and the wedding gown.

"You must be married in blue," she said, "for that's your color; and you must wear your grandmother's lace shawl."

"And we will have a wedding supper," boomed Comfort's father. Mr. Rhodes was a giant of a man with grizzled hair and black eyes under white brows.

Comfort smiled and agreed to everything, for she was very happy. The greater part of every day now she sat in the corner and merrily turned her spinning wheel, for down in Pone Hollow Severe was building a small new cabin. No linen could be too carefully spun for that cabin.

The wedding was set for the first of May. All spring Severe had been plowing his little patch of ground in Pone Hollow by moonlight, because of the green-headed flies. These insects were a great trouble to the early settlers, for they were everywhere, and if the

young horses and cows were exposed to them, they were often stung to death. Hence men plowed and planted and even traveled by the light of the moon.

A neighbor woman, Drusilla Harvey, rode fifty miles across the prairie to help make the wedding dress. She was a thin woman with a sharp tongue and a twitching thumb, but she could sew better than any one, Comfort thought.

At last the wedding day came, seemingly a perfect day in May. The wild crab apple blooms lay like a pink, fragrant blanket on all the little hills, and in the redbud trees the bees hummed and hummed. The redbirds whistled down in the valley, and all the father thrushes in the country warbled while their mates sat on nests cunningly hid in the wild rosebushes, waiting for their babies to come.

Then, about nine o'clock, there came over a cloud from the northeast. It was followed by another, then another. In a half hour the rain was falling fast, and pretty Comfort

stood in the open door of the cabin, gazing sadly out at the streaming landscape.

"There, don't you mind," said her mother. "A little rain won't keep anybody away. The men'll be glad to stop their planting. I reckon everybody'll be here."

There were three seasons for the pioneers of that time: winter, spring, and fall. In the winter they hunted wolves and deer; in the spring they plowed the rich black soil and planted oats, corn, and a little wheat; in the fall they drove to Chicago (200 miles) to sell their oats at twelve and one half cents a bushel.

"I'm not crying for that," said Comfort. "It's the river I'm afraid of. You know Omey Only said yesterday that it's been raining hard up north for a week. All the creeks up there are out of their banks. Severe said yesterday that the river had risen a foot. And then we hadn't had a drop of rain. What will it be by night? I'm afraid we can't go h-home to-night."

Severe's cabin lay a half mile from the Rhodes cabin, on the other side of the river. There was not a bridge within fifty miles; you forded the muddy waters on horseback, or else, if you were on foot, you crossed gingerly on the trunk of a great fallen oak.

"The water was up to the log yesterday," said poor Comfort.

"Never mind; I reckon Severe can ford the river on old Jinny, if the worst comes to the worst. Now you'd better help me with those pies."

The hour of the wedding had been set for three o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests (there were to be twenty in all) might arrive in plenty of time. Some of them lived thirty miles away. Then would come the marriage feast. The guests who lived only a short distance away, ten or fifteen miles, would return that night; the rest would be disposed of somehow in the Rhodes cabin. Luckily it had a loft.

By one o'clock the guests had arrived. First came the Pancake family, with five little Pancakes of varying degrees of roundness and thickness. The children were all so jolly and healthy looking as they crawled out of the covered wagon and scampered into the house, that both Comfort and her mother kissed every rain-wet cheek. The Pancake baby was so joyful over being allowed to come to a wedding at such a tender age that he crowed until he doubled up and hung motionless over Comfort's arm.

Next came the two Stringfields, Severe's father and mother. They were simple, kindly people in rough homespun. They greeted Comfort happily, for they felt that their son was getting a good wife.

After that there was a thin trickle of guests for over an hour. Old Granny Sharks, who was rheumatic and very ill-tempered, had insisted on coming, in spite of the rain. She was in a pet by the time she was put down on the hearth, still glued to her rush-bottomed

chair, from which she had refused to be separated.

"Them a-tryin' to mek me stay to hum!" she sniffed to Comfort. "I told 'em I was comin' to see you married if I had to swim! And I be comin', I be!"

She glared at Comfort and repeated violently, "I be!"

Finally Granny took out from her pocket her corncob pipe and began to smoke. Gradually her anger melted, and by the time Comfort was dressed in her bridal finery, Granny was fast asleep, her chin dropped on her bosom.

When it was three o'clock, Comfort began to dress. Her gown was of blue and white calico. There were four widths to the skirt, the two front ones being gored. The waist was very short, and fastened behind with a draw string. The sleeves were immense, tapering from the shoulder to the wrist. "Sheep-shanks' sleeves," they called them. You will smile when I tell you that they were

thickly padded with feathers to make them keep their shape.

No big sleeves and no queerly hanging skirt could dim the rosy beauty of Comfort's face, however. She was well satisfied with her new calico — didn't it cost forty cents a yard? And when she threw about her plump white shoulders the shawl which had come from England, there was not a prettier sight in the whole world.

But the bridegroom — where was he?

When the rain had started, he was in the new cabin, putting up a shelf for Comfort's few precious pewter dishes. As the drops came faster and faster, until, in fact, the very heavens seemed to pour down upon the earth, he decided to wait there until after the deluge passed. As the hours went on, the rain came faster, if possible. There was plenty to eat in the house, for he had furnished it well for his young bride, but Severe would not eat. He wished to break bread for the first time in the new home with Comfort.

Finally, when it drew near to three o'clock, he became alarmed. He had intended to dress here; he had brought his wedding clothes — new butternut jeans and a pleated shirt. Such finery would be ruined in five minutes in such a rain.

Then a bright idea came to him. He snatched up a buckskin meal sack and thrust the garments into it. Tying the mouth of the bag tightly with a bit of buckskin string, he gave one last glance at the cozy cabin, and then walked out into the downpour.

It was an anxious bride who greeted him ten minutes later, as he stood dripping on the Rhodes threshold. He answered the banter of the guests smilingly, and then looked soberly at pretty Comfort.

"Comfort," he said, "I hadn't calklated on comin' like a frog the first time I married you. But I've got all my glory in this meal-bag. I reckon I'd better crawl into the loft and put it on. And then if there's any eatin', I move we eat first and be married

afterwards. I'll tell you why. The river's rose awful, and I know Old Liveforever's goin' to have a hard time gettin' here."

Comfort nodded gravely. "It seems as if everything's just trying to spoil my wedding day," she said, with tears in her eyes. "The Blaines haven't come — on account of the high water, I suppose — nor the Joneses, nor the Wheelers."

"All the more for us to eat, then," cried Severe cheerfully, as he crawled into the loft.

The minister who was to marry them was to come from the settlement thirty miles away. He was called Old Liveforever, because of his peculiar beliefs. Man, he said, was not meant to die. He himself never meant to die. Old Liveforever had made preaching engagements for five hundred years ahead.

When Severe descended from the loft, he took his place at Comfort's side, and good Mrs. Rhodes, aided by a very fat neighbor who wheezed as she walked, waited on the guests.

Such slices of bear bacon as were eaten — such haunches of venison! What a number of pies disappeared, and what quarts of coffee made from roasted wheat! And what happiness there was in the log house, even though the rain poured outside and the minister was many watery miles away!

Just about dark, Mr. Rhodes suddenly lifted his hand for silence.

"I hear some one shouting," he said.

Sure enough, there came a long call. "Severe! Severe Stringfield!"

"It's the minister," cried Severe joyfully, and ran to the door. The rain had ceased at last.

"I'll run down to the river and meet him," said Mr. Rhodes, and off he splashed.

A little later he came back with a sober face.

"He can't get across," he said. "The water's turrible high, and his horse won't swim it. He says for you to come down to the bank and he'll marry you anyway."

Severe turned to look at Comfort.

"I suppose that we might as well," she said.

Then what a hurrying to and fro there was in that little backwoods cabin! Granny had come to life again, and she gave more shrill commands in one minute than two people could possibly fulfill in a half hour. Mrs. Stringfield looked down the path to the river; then she turned doubtfully to Comfort's mother.

"I'm thinking," she said, "that if we see our children married, we'll have to wade."

And that is exactly what they had to do.

Soon there rode forth from the little house, on old Jinny, the bridegroom and his bride. Comfort clung lightly to the stalwart form of Severe, and she wore around her shoulders the delicate web of the white shawl. As the horse paused for a moment in the light which streamed out from the open doorway, Mrs. Stringfield thought that she had never seen a lovelier sight than the face behind that of her boy. The dampness had made little

straying ringlets around the edge of the straw bonnet, and on the girl's breast some one had pinned a fragrant cluster of wild crab apple blossoms. Then old Jinny, of her own accord, started with important steps down to the river. After her came the wedding guests, shrieking and laughing as they waded barefooted through the mud and water. Ruin their shoes, even for a wedding? Never! When I tell you that the best imported calfskin boots of those days cost five hundred dollars, you will not wonder that these thrifty people tried to save their sturdy foot covering.

Presently all reached the shore of the river. The tall form of the parson could barely be made out as he sat on his great horse under the big willow on the opposite bank.

"I can't see you," he called.

Then by dint of much coaxing, he forced his horse out into the yellow water, until it came up to Old Dobbin's flanks. And then and there, by the light of a flickering pine

torch, with the river hurrying by and the whippoorwills calling in the timber, Severe and Comfort were married. Severe had no money, but he promised to pay his fee in maple sugar the following spring.

It was here that old Jinny surprised everybody. Whatever made her do so, no one ever knew, but she calmly walked out into the river and was stemming the current before Severe could tighten the reins. She swam steadily through the water and finally came out on the opposite bank, where she stopped by Dobbin.

How the wedding guests shouted and laughed! And how pleased was Severe! How concerned Comfort was over her bedraggled gown!

In pioneer days, however, few tears were shed over the unexpected and unpleasant, and in a few moments the young people were smiling to think how much sooner they had come home than they had expected. They waved a good-by, which no one saw, to the

little group with the torch, and shouted to them a last message for Granny, who had been left in the cabin.

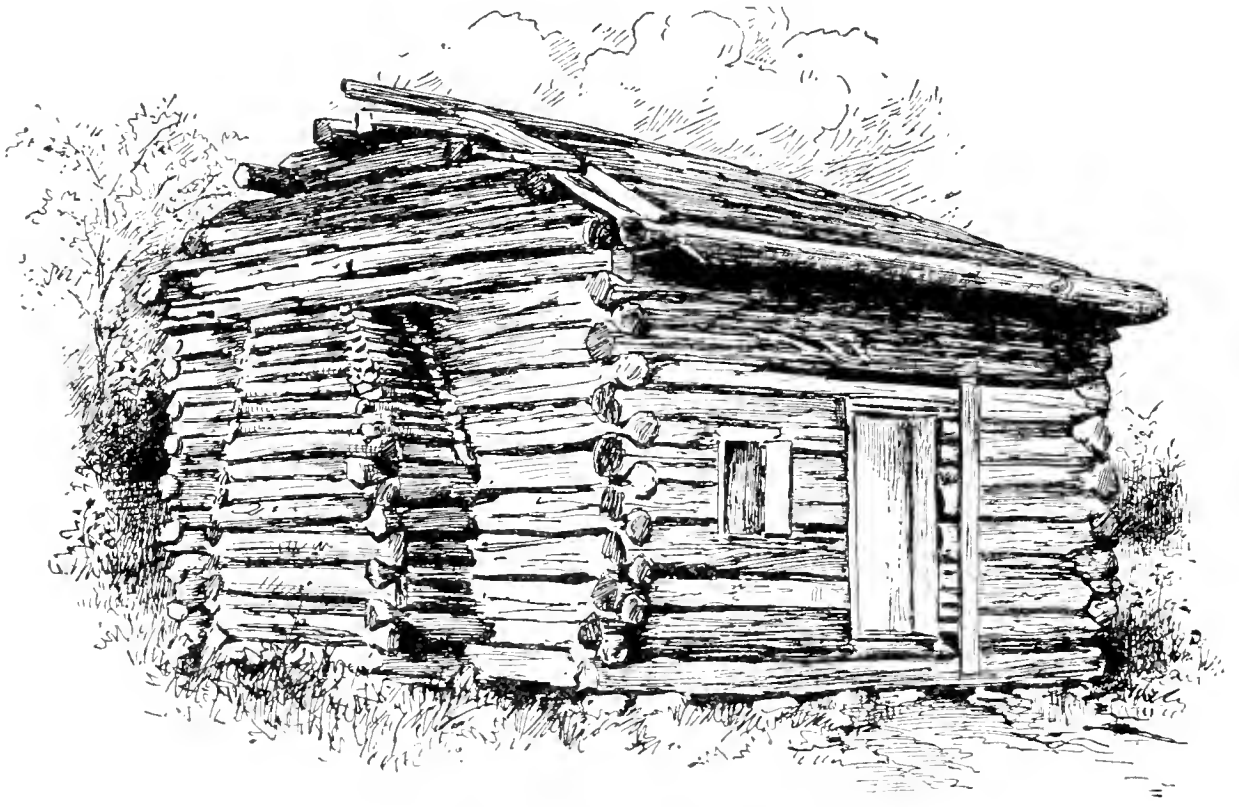
Then, with the preacher, they rode slowly up the bank and through the woods to their own little cabin with the bed, the blue chest used as a table, the settle, and the shelf for the precious pewter. This was home.

LINCOLN IN MACON COUNTY

In March of the year 1830, the year before the memorable "big snow," Thomas Lincoln, an Indiana squatter, started West with his family. There were with him his wife, two daughters and their husbands, and a long, lanky youth of twenty-one, his son Abraham. Although winter was not yet over, there was a hint of spring in the air, and the boy, feeling it, urged forward his slow ox team, while his eyes hopefully sought the prairie stretching endlessly to the west. Behind him followed his father, driving the other wagon, which was pulled by oxen even slower. The spring thaw had begun, and the thick mud in places came to the axles of the heavy movers' wagons.

Here and there in the leafless trees the boy saw a bluebird or a tufted titmouse, and once

a Kentucky cardinal called cheerily to him from the top of a dead oak. He greeted it with a slow wave of his long arm as he spied it, a scarlet spot on the topmost branch.



Birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

Between the sucking sounds made by the oxen's feet as they plunged in and out of the heavy black mire, he heard the cawing of crows and the scream of the bluejays, and once the clear call of a quail.

To help pass the time, for the wagons trav-

eled more and more slowly, he tried to name the trees he passed. He found that he knew few of them except the burr oaks, the walnuts and hickories, the elms and the willows.

"Haw!" he called suddenly to the oxen, who had swerved too far to the right, and were about to plunge the wagon into a ditch full of stagnant water.

John Hanks, who was seven years older than Abraham Lincoln, and who had bought a piece of land next the Lincoln farm in Indiana, had improved it, returning then to Kentucky, whence both families had come. In 1828 he had decided to move to Illinois, and on his way to the new home he had stopped for a while with the Lincolns in Indiana.

"Write to us," said Thomas Lincoln at parting, "and tell us what you think of the new country. If it's better than Indiana, we'll go too."

Mr. Hanks had shaken hands, clucked to his oxen, and started away into the west. The boy Abraham had watched him until

the wagon was only a white blur in the distance.

"I like this place," wrote back Mr. Hanks to his friends. "It's far better than your Indiana soil. You'd better come."

Hence Thomas Lincoln had started.

On the morning of the fifteenth day, after traveling two hundred miles, the Lincolns reached Macon County, Illinois.

"We will stop here," said the young Lincoln's father. "Let us find a good place for a cabin."

The place was soon found. It lay on the north side of the little Sangamon River. Abraham was glad to climb down from the wagon when they reached it, for he was stiff from the long trip.

Mr. Hanks soon came to greet his friends.

"When I first came," he said, "I intended to locate here on the north bank of the river, but I didn't have horses enough to break the prairie, and so I abandoned the place and went on four miles farther to Hickory Point.

I cut that pile of logs for my house, and you may have them for your cabin, if you like the country and want to stay."

"I do," responded Thomas Lincoln. "Abe, you take a yoke of oxen and drag those logs over to the big oak yonder."

The boy did so at once, working eagerly.

Soon work was begun on the cabin. It was made of hewed timber, chinked with moss and clay. It had a puncheon floor (split logs with the smooth side up), puncheon doors, and a big fireplace. Over this the women hung, planning things they would cook. Fifteen days of hard traveling by wagon had made them eager for a house, however poor. The gable ends of the house were boarded up with planks "rived" of oak by Abraham.

The work went very slowly, for the only tools Thomas Lincoln had were a common ax, a hand saw, and a drawer knife. He had brought a few nails from Indiana, and these were unbelievably precious.

After the cabin was completed, the men put up a smokehouse and a stable. Then the boy helped split enough rails to fence a ten-acre lot, and he built the fence himself. Later, when the spring really came, with the ox teams he broke the ground and planted corn. For this he waited "until the hickory leaves were as big as squirrel ears." As he dropped the corn, something in the singing spring made his own blood leap; something in the vast reach and promise of the prairies called to him, and, as to Dick Whittington, there came to the uncouth lad on the edge of the wilderness, the desire to go forth and seek his own fortune.

"Father," he said, one evening after he had finished plowing, hung up his 'coon skin cap, and drunk from the hollow gourd, "you're pretty well started here now. I'm going to strike out for myself."

He did not leave that region immediately, but worked out among farmers, earning barely enough to buy his clothes. Some

people say he broke fifty acres of prairie with four yoke of oxen that year, and that he spent most of the winter splitting rails.

One summer he worked as "hired man" for a Mr. Brown, and put in a crop of corn. Every spare moment he could get he devoted to reading. Years later, Mrs. Brown told this anecdote.

"Mr. Lincoln worked for my old man thirty-four year ago, and put in a crap of corn. The next winter he druv with my old man all the way to town and sold it for two dollars and a half a bushel.

"Then there weren't any taverns like there is now, and when you were traveling you had to stop wherever they'd take you in. Well, once one summer evenin' a right peart-lookin' man rid up to our house and asked if he could have lodgin' for the night. 'Well,' said my old man, 'I reckon we can feed your critter all right, and I reckon we can feed you, only you'll have to sleep with the hired man.' The stranger, who was right smart-lookin', kind o'

hung back at that. 'Where is he?' he sez. 'You come see,' sez my old man. And he took him where Mr. Lincoln was layin' in the shade of the house, readin' a book. 'There,' sez my old man, 'there he is.' The stranger looked at him hard. 'Well, I reckon he'll do,' he sez. He didn't know he was sleepin' with the future president of the United States."

You must remember that in those days there were no libraries in the backwoods. Books were few and very precious. Boys walked twenty-five or thirty miles to borrow a volume of Scott, and in many homes the almanac furnished the only literature, except as now and then a package came wrapped in a precious year-old newspaper. Lincoln's friends were glad to lend him the books he craved, and as soon as the farm work was over in winter, the young man threw himself down on the hearth and read by the bright firelight, while the good housewife mixed cracklings, fresh from the newly rendered

lard, with meal and water to bake the crisp, tender corn pone. Corn pone and sweet milk furnished a supper fit for a king.

Lincoln did not spend all of his spare moments in reading, however. Nor was he without friends. He had several good friends, and one of the closest about this time was James Sanders, who was famed throughout the county for his strength. Once he threw Abraham Lincoln in a wrestling match after Lincoln had thrown the town bully.

At the wedding of one Uncle Joe Stevens, the men as usual indulged in feats of strength. Sanders picked up two pieces of lead, each seventy-five pounds in weight, lifted them as high as his shoulders, and made them touch in front. This man, who had come from South Carolina with a wife, five children, four horses, and six and one fourth cents, was Lincoln's constant companion for some time. They frequently went to house raisings and husking bees together.

In pioneer times the husking bee was a

great event. Many a time young Lincoln and his brawny friend, both clad in hunting shirt and deerskin trousers, went to a shucking together. Then corn was never husked in the field as it is to-day. The crops were hauled home unhusked, and often thrown down beside the corncribs, so that the ears, when husked, could be thrown into the crib.

Picture for yourself Abraham and James, on a November afternoon, watching while the great pile of unshucked corn was divided into two equal parts by some zealous soul. This was done by laying rails across the middle of the pile. Next two of the swiftest huskers were chosen as captains for the contest. These two men now chose sides, picking out the women as well as the men to help them.

What fun there was when the shucking began! What a hubbub arose! What excitement when a youth found a red ear of corn and looked about for a girl, according to custom, to kiss!

Supper was usually served before dark. Before the meal was really ended oftentimes, the young people arose and demanded that the room be cleared for the dance, which always followed the husking. The dishes were merrily snatched off the table, and the chairs put outside the house, though the older people scolded vigorously. The fiddler, who was often a very important and pompous person, tuned his fiddle and broke into the strain of *Old Dan Tucker*.

"Old Dan Tucker came to town,
Saluted the ladies all around;
First to the right and then to the left
And then to the one that you love best."

It is said that Lincoln was a shy youth and enjoyed looking on at such festivities better than taking part in them. He was more at home in the wrestling matches with which the dances occasionally broke up.

One of the early residents of Macon County, a Mrs. Woods, often told this tale of Lin-

coln's shyness. It happened in the days when harvesters went from house to house to cut the grain. To one of these harvesting gangs, composed of stalwart young men, Lincoln belonged. He was tall and lanky for his age, with his blue jeans sleeves and trouser legs so short that his arms and feet seemed very large and awkward. To his companions, therefore, he was a constant subject of mirth.

One day the harvesting gang went to the home of Mrs. Woods' sister. Lincoln by this time had become so sensitive that he refused to eat with the other harvesters when noon came, but ate instead under the apple tree in the back yard.

On the third day some one persuaded him to go into the house when dinner was ready. He sat on a puncheon stool at the end of a puncheon table. In those days, harvest time was the signal for all the pretty young girls of the countryside to rally to the home of the people whose grain was being cut. These

girls did the cooking and waited upon the table. Just as one of these pretty maids stopped beside young Lincoln with a cup of hot coffee in her hand, his companions again began to jeer good-naturedly at his ungainly height. The youth gave a quick gesture of embarrassment, knocking the cup from the girl's hand, and sending the scalding coffee over himself. After that, all through the harvesting season, he refused to eat with the others, and patiently took his meals outdoors, a lonely, pathetic figure.

Here is an anecdote of Lincoln's shrewdness, often related in Decatur. A long time ago, at the Old Fair Grounds in that city, an enterprising backwoodsman displayed a quarrelsome badger in a barrel.

"Twenty-five cents," he called, "twenty-five cents to let your dog get the badger out of the barrel! Twenty-five cents if you're successful!"

At that time every man had at least two or three old hounds following him, and one

by one the owners stepped up and entered each hound for the event. Every dog retreated before the snarling badger and refused to fight.

On the outskirts of the crowd stood Abraham Lincoln, a gaunt, amused spectator. He turned to a friend, at whose feet a dog lay curled in fear.

"I'll furnish the quarter," said Lincoln, "if you'll enter your dog. If he wins the ten dollars, we'll split it."

"Oh, he won't fight," said the owner. "He can't bring it out."

"Yes, he can," responded Lincoln with a slow smile. "I can get that dog to bring the critter out. Let's try. I'll succeed."

"You'll lose your money. Keep your quarter, Abe."

Lincoln insisted, however. He went up to the owner of the badger and explained the contract to him and to the crowd which had gathered. He handed the man a quarter.

Then he turned around, quickly grasped

the crouching dog by the skin over his hips, and flung him, tail first, into the barrel. In a second the dog rushed out, unhurt but howling, with the badger on his back!

The spectators broke into laughter and handclapping.

"No fair!" called the owner of the animal. "That's no fair! The dog had to go in after the badger and bring it out!"

"On the contrary," said Lincoln with a good-natured smile, "I only contracted to bring the badger out. The ten dollars is mine."

And amid the jibes of the crowd the owner of the animal had to hand over the money.

Before he left Macon County, Lincoln used occasionally to go see Anne Warnicke, the daughter of Major Warnicke, who was at that time sheriff of Macon County. One winter day he was on his way to pay his respects to her. He had to cross the Sangamon River at a point about two miles from his own home. The river was frozen, and the

ice apparently safe, but when the young man reached the middle of the stream, the ice broke, and he had to struggle hard to reach a firm footing. He was wet to the knees, but he plunged doggedly ahead. The water froze on his clothes, and he felt very cold. He stumbled along the remaining five miles to the Warnicke house. When he reached it, his feet were frozen. Lincoln would have made light of the matter, but the Warnickes would not let him. They promptly put him to bed, and there he stayed two weeks.

It was while taking this enforced vacation that he eagerly read through the Major's library. This was not large, as it consisted mainly of *The Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois*. Over this book, as if it had been the most absorbing story ever written, Lincoln pored hour after hour. It was then that he definitely decided to become a lawyer.

The years went on, and Abraham did become a lawyer, as he had wished. The old log court house, where he argued his first

case, still stands in Decatur, lovingly cherished and protected by the Daughters of the American Revolution. The square on which it once stood still bears Lincoln's name.

A story is told of one of Lincoln's first cases. The earnest young lawyer was defending a woodchopper, with whom he was acquainted, soon after his admission to the bar. He cleared the woodchopper, and the man gave him as a fee fifty cents, which was all he had.

"I will pay you later on," he said thankfully.

"No, this is enough," answered Lincoln. "You have paid your bill."

The story leaked out that Abraham had accepted a fee of fifty cents as attorney.

"This will never do," thought the other lawyers in the town, and they all waited upon Lincoln in a body. He was called to account. Was it true that he had accepted such a ridiculously low fee? Was it a fact?

"It is true," said Lincoln.

"This will never do. It is a disgrace to the profession. It is very unprofessional to accept such a penurious fee. We are degraded."

Lincoln studied a bit.

"Gentlemen, is it unprofessional to accept a fifty cent fee?"

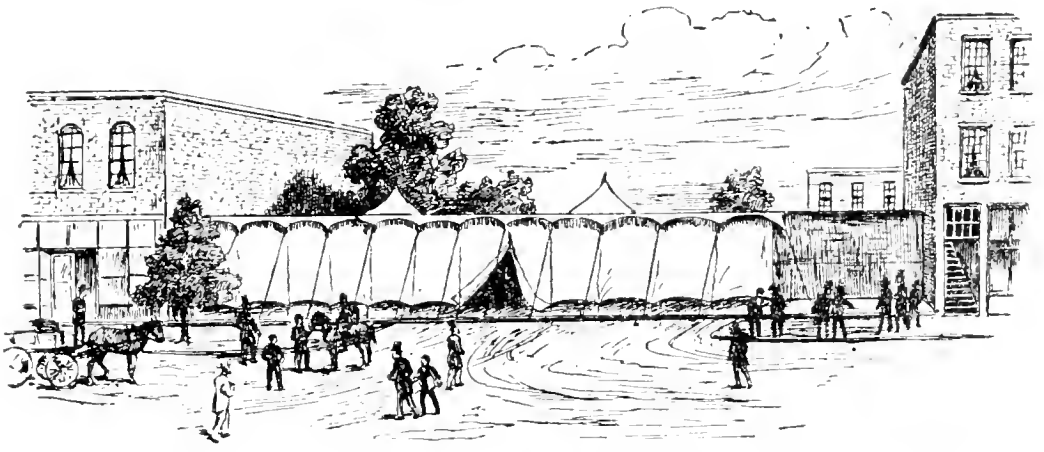
"It certainly is."

"Well, gentlemen, I took from the man every cent he had in the world. If there is anything unprofessional about that, it's plain where it comes in."

The years went on, and in 1860 Lincoln was mentioned as a candidate for the presidency, but few people paid any attention to this. The State Convention was to be held in Decatur in May — but where? There was no room big enough to hold all the delegates, much less the crowd of people who were to be guests.

Finally the problem was solved. Although lumber yards in Decatur were few then, and

although lumber was very hard to rent, enough was secured to build, on some vacant lots near the center of town, a rude structure. The roof was flat and sloped south with the surface of the ground. Richard Oglesby se-



This Queer Structure was Named "The Wigwam."

cured a tent fly from a circus company. "This was attached to the wooden part," says the *Decatur Herald*, "and stretched flat across to near the east building, supported by posts and stringers. It was roped down at the ends and sides."

This queer structure was named "The Wigwam," and as The Wigwam it has gone down in history.

"To Oglesby, of Decatur," says Mrs. Jane Martin Johns in her *Personal Recollections of Early Decatur*, "must be conceded the honor of *creating* the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln for the presidency of the United States. . . . One day he met John Hanks who, he knew, had worked with Lincoln on a farm years and years before, and asked him 'what kind of work Abe used to be good at.'

"'Well, not much of any kind but dreaming,' was Hanks' reply, 'but he did help me split a lot of rails when we made the clearing twelve miles west of here.'

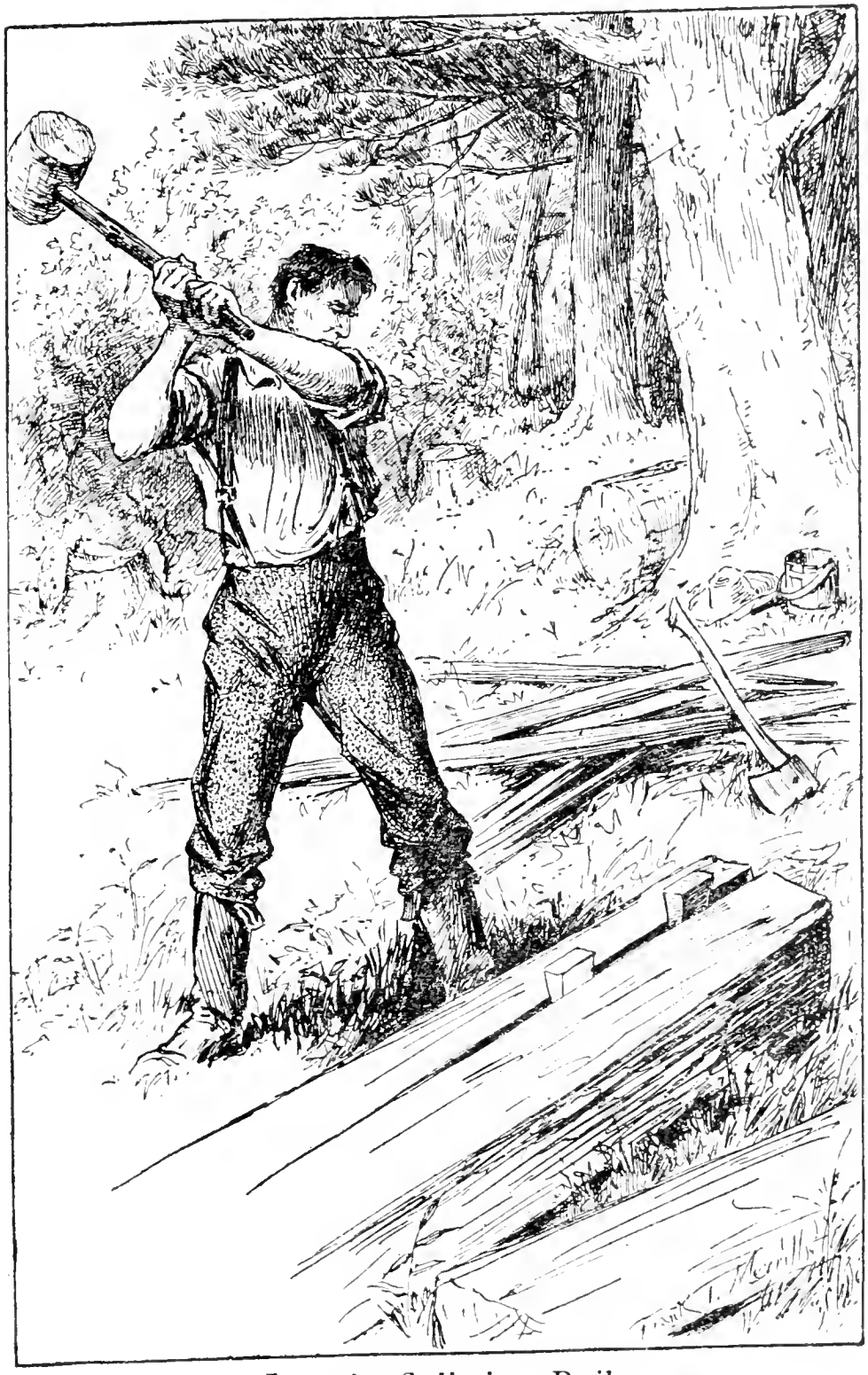
"The rest of the story I will give as it was related to J. McCan Davis, clerk of the Supreme Court of Illinois, by Mr. Oglesby himself.

"'John,' said I, 'did you split rails down there with Old Abe?'

"'Yes; every day,' he replied.

"'Do you suppose you could find any of them now?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'the last time I was down



Lincoln Splitting Rails.

there, ten years ago, there were plenty of them left.'

"'What are you going to do to-morrow?'

"'Nothing.'

"'Then,' said I, 'come around and get in my buggy and we will drive down there.'

"So the next day we drove down to the old clearing. We turned in by the timber and John said, 'Dick, if I don't find any black walnut rails, nor any honey-locust rails, I won't claim it's the fence Abe and I built.'

"Presently John said, 'There's the fence.'

"'But look at those great trees,' said I.

"'Certainly,' he answered. 'They have all grown up since.'

"John got out and I stayed in the buggy. John kneeled down and commenced chipping the rails of the fence with an old penknife. Soon he came back with black walnut shavings and honey-locust shavings.

"'There they are,' said he, triumphantly holding out the shavings. 'They are the identical rails we made.'

"Then I got out and made an examination of the fence. There were many black walnut and honey-locust rails.

"'John,' said I, 'where did you cut these rails?'

"'I can take you to the stumps,' he answered.

"'We will go down there,' said I.

"We drove about one hundred yards.

"'Now,' said he, 'look! There's a black walnut stump; there's another — another — another. Here's where we cut the trees down and split the rails. Then we got a horse and wagon, hauled them in, and built the fence and the cabin.'

"We took two of the rails and tied them under the hind-axle tree of my new buggy, and started for town. People would occasionally pass and think something was broken. We let them think so, for we didn't wish to tell anybody just what we were doing. We kept right on until we got to my barn. There we hid the rails until the day of the convention.

"Before the convention met, I talked with several Republicans about my plan, and we fixed it up that old John Hanks should take the rails into the convention. We made a banner and attached it to a board across the top of the rails, with the inscription:

"'Abraham Lincoln, The Railsplitter Candidate for President in 1860. Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in 1830 by John Hanks and Abe Lincoln.'

"After the convention got under way, I arose and announced that an old Democrat desired to make a contribution to the convention. The proceedings stopped, and all was expectancy and excitement. Then in walked old John with the banner on the rails.

"From that time the rails were ever present in the campaign.

"The Seward boom was dead. 'Dick' Oglesby and old John Hanks and two fence rails had killed it.

"John M. Palmer was soon on his feet with a resolution declaring that 'Abraham Lin-

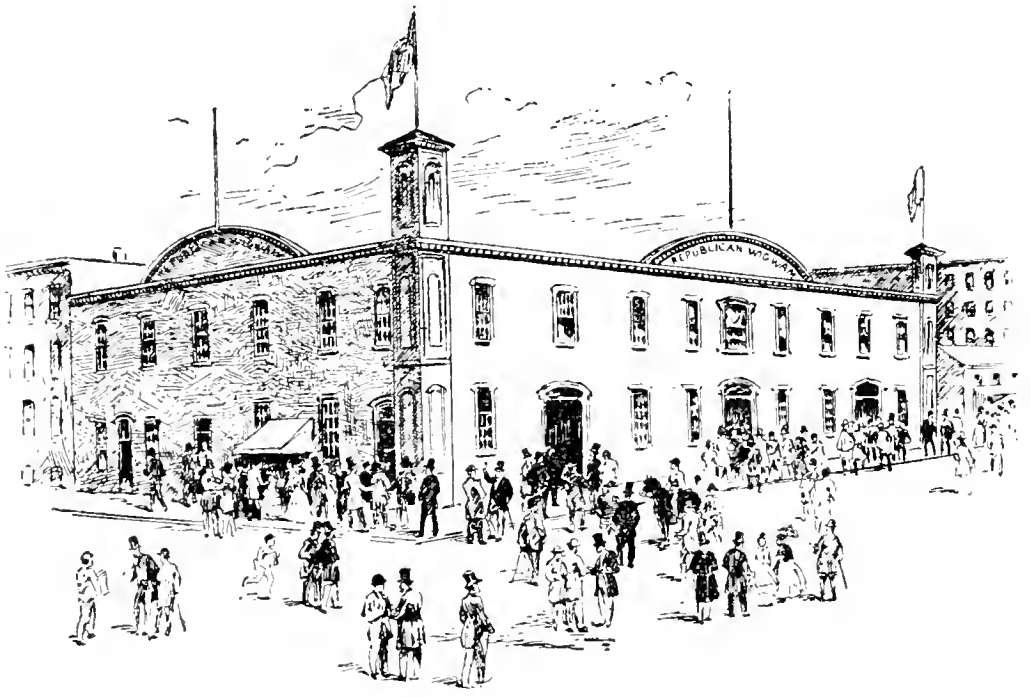
coln is the first choice of the Republican party of Illinois for the presidency,' and instructing 'the delegates to the Chicago convention to use all honorable means to secure the nomination and to cast the vote of the state as a unit for him.' . . .

"The enthusiasm with which this rail-framed banner was received by the convention is unrivaled in history, unless we except the reception of Mr. Lincoln's nomination in Chicago a few weeks later. The roof was literally cheered off the building, hats and books and canes and papers were tossed aloft, as men jumped and screamed and howled, until part of the awning over the platform fell on their heads. When the enthusiasm finally subsided, the Wigwam was almost a wreck. . . .

"It was a complete surprise to Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lowber Burrows, who was present, thus described the scene.

"'Yes, I was present when Johnny Hanks carried that banner into the convention, and

the whole crowd went wild. The members were simply frantic with surprise and delight. Lincoln was wildly called for. You know, he could not be found when they wanted him. A committee hunted around and finally found him asleep in the back room of his friend



Wigwam in Chicago where Lincoln was Nominated for President

Jim Peake's jewelry store. Lincoln had wandered into the store, seeking for a few minutes' rest and quiet, and, seeing the couch, threw himself upon it and soon fell asleep.

"'He was roused and rushed through a back

entrance to the platform of the convention. He knew nothing of the plot, and when confronted with the banner, stood for a few moments simply dazed with astonishment. When told that these were rails he had split, he said: "Gentlemen, John and I did split some rails down there, and if these are not the identical rails we certainly made some quite as good." ""

After that his days were not long in Macon County. He had been called by the world, and he went forth to do the work of the world, one of the truest, finest gentlemen our country has ever known.

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